LIFE Project Number

LIFE06 NAT/H/000098

MID-TERM REPORT

Covering the project activities from 01.09.2006. to 31.01.2009.

Reporting Date

31.01.2009.

LIFE PROJECT NAME

Conservation of *Euro-Siberian steppic woods* and *Pannonic sand steppes* in 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI

Data Project

Project location	Hungary
Project start date:	01.09.2006.
Project end date:	31.08.2011.
Total Project duration (in months)	60 months
Total budget	1 863 236 €
EC contribution:	1 397 427 €
(%) of total costs	75%
(%) of eligible costs	75%

Data Beneficiary

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1. List of Contents and Annexes

Mid-Term Report

2. Lists of key-words and abbreviations

Key words:

Central-Hungary, Euro-Siberian steppe oaks, Pannonic sand steppes, conservation, management, Natura 2000

Abbreviations:

DINPI - Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate

NKÖ - Local Government of Nagykőrös Town

WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature

MEW - Ministry for Environment and Water

SFS - State Forestry Service

NEFAG - Nagykőrös Forestry Company

pSCI - proposed Site of Community Importance

3. Executive Summary

Project objectives

Through the cooperation of Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate, Local Government of Town Nagykőrös and WWF Hungary partners requisite for the establishment of the successful long-term conservation and improvement of the favourable conservational status of the Euro-Siberian steppe woods with Quercus spp. and Pannonic sand steppes priority habitats in 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' proposed priority Site of Community Importance are ensured. These unique habitats can be found exclusively in the Carpathian Basin, moreover steppe oak forests of Nagykőrös represent the last larger, more or less continuous area of them. These habitats are seriously threatened by the spread of alien species, problems in natural forest regeneration capacity, improper forest management practices, fragmentation and by the ignorance of society as well as lack of information related to this area.

Expected results:

1.) 405 ha area becomes free of invasive species in 99% (with using mechanical and chemical methods as well as post-treatment the arboreal and herbaceous invasive species are gradually removed from the area).

2.) With the exclusion of game, relevant information is gained on that the decrease of ground water level accounts alone for the elimination of the natural forest regeneration processes or the excessive game population has a devastative effect on these (with fencing off forest compartments and monitoring).

3.) Change in forest management practices by taking over the restricted right of disposal from the forest owners over 175 ha of pSCI (through agreements and compensation we ensure, that forestry management actions harming the precious habitats are halted for 90 years as exclusively the conservational management tasks can be implemented in these areas).

4.) 88.5 ha indigenous forest is established in the patches formerly occupied by invasives (the reconstruction of the external and inner unity of the habitat of steppe oak forests by artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species are implemented).

5.) Elimination of lack of information and ignorance of local communities as well as information dissemination and utilisation of know-how on the steppe oak forests through communication aiming at the public, professionals, together with environmental education (media work, website, professional and public events, reconstruction of Educational Centre, outbuildings and camp area together with equipment is completed, complex environmental educational programmes (min. 3) are developed complying with the local and regional needs in this pSCI site).

6.) Management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site is elaborated (in the management plan all available data - former and novel, national, international - suggestions and results of the research carried out in the area regarding the biological state and monitoring of the effects of management tasks are utilized).

List of key deliverables and outputs

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Deliverable or Milestone	**Reference Action**	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Evidence of reaching deliverable/milestone**	**Annex**
project system is established	A1	31.12.2006	completed 05.10.2006	minutes of the kick-off meeting	1 PR: A1-1
detailed partners' agreements are signed	A1	. 31.12.2006	completed 01.01.2007	partnership agreement	sent to the Commission on 02.05.2007
Advisory Board is set up	A1	. 31.12.2006	completed 08.05.2007	correspondence, memorandum and photo of the foundation meeting of Steppe Oaks Advisory Board, presentation	1 PR: A1-5/a-b, A1-6/a, A1-6/b, 1 PR: G/a
regional office is leased	A1	31.12.2006	completed 01.03.2007	photos on the leased regional office	1 PR: A1-3/a-d
personnel is recruited	A1	31.12.2006	completed 16.10.2006	official task descriptions	1 PR: A1-2
durable goods are purchased (4 WD car, 2 laptop, 2 GPS, 1 digital camera)	A1	31.12.2006	30.03.2007	photo on 4WD car	1 PR: A1-4
project introductory brochure is prepared (10000 copies)	A1	31.12.2006	completed 14.03.2007	information brochure in Hungarian and English languages (samples are attached), list of distribution	1 PR: A1-7/a-b, A2-3, A1-8 MTR: A1-1
notice boards are placed out (2 items)	A1	31.12.2006	completed 22.03.2007	texts and photos on two information boards and their inauguration	1 PR: A1-9/a-b, A1-10/a-b
project logo and complex project design is ready	A2	31.12.2006	completed 27.02.2007	logo (appearing in every material connected to the project)	1 PR: A2-1
promotion materials are prepared (3000-3500 items)	A2	31.12.2006	completed 28.09.2007	promotion materials (folder, magnet, sticker, pen, textile bag) (samples are attached) and their distribution lists	1 PR: A2-2, A2-3 MTR: A2-1
authorized reconstruction plan for educational centre and its surroundings is ready	A3	31.03.2007	completed 30.06.2007	photos of meetings, final authorised plans of the educational centre (plans are attached) and its surroundings	1 PR: A3-1/a-b, A3-2/a-c

public tendering is completed	A3	31.03.2007	completed 20.12.2007	summary of public tendering procedure, decision of board	1 PR: A3-3, A3-4
modified forestry management plans are completed	A4	31.03.2007	completed 31.08.2007	modified forestry management plan (example)	A4-1, A4-2, A4-3
detailed contracts are ready	A4	31.03.2007	completed 17.12.2007 12.08.2008	final detailed contract (example, same as in B1)	1 PR: B1-1/a-b MTR: B1-2 (on DVD)
public tendering is completed	A4	31.03.2007	completed on 325 ha 22.12.2008 not started yet on the rest of 405 ha of target site	contracts on 325 ha	1 PR: A4-4/a-b, A4-5 MTR: A4-2/1-4 A4-3/1-5 A4-4/1-2 A4-5
management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site is ready	A5	31.07.2011	not started yet		
contracts are ready and signed (restricted right of disposal over 175 ha of pSCI)	B1	31.12.2006	completed 17.12.2007 (12.08.2008)	detailed pre-contract, signed contract (example), photo on the occasion Final signed contract (example), photo on occasion	1 PR: B1/a-b, B1-2 MTR: B1-1 B1-2 (on DVD)
restricted right of disposal over 175 ha of pSCI is taken over	B1	31.08.2011	on-going		
70% elimination of arboreal invasives in 405 ha	C1	31.03.2008.	completed on 325 ha 31.10.2008 not started yet on the rest of 405 ha of target site	photos, minutes on handovers	MTR: C1-1/1-5 C1-2

In a 88.5 ha area (60 ha in larger patches, 28.5 ha in smaller patches) the reconstruction of the external and inner unity of the habitat by forest regeneration with indigenous species is developed, plantation is completed	C2	31.05.2008.	on-going	photos, minutes on handovers	MTR: C2-1 C2-2/1-5 C2-3 C2-4
12600 m game fence is completed	C3	31.12.2007.	on-going	photos	MTR: C3-1/1-3 C3-2
reconstruction of Educational Centre, outbuildings and camp area together with equipment is completed	C4	31.05.2008.	completed: reconstruction 05.06.2008 on-going: equipment	photos	MTR: C4-1/1-5 C4-2
405 ha area is free of invasive species in 99%	D1	30.11.2010.	not started yet		
88.5 ha indigenous forest is established	D2	30.11.2010.	not started yet		
4 national press conference with trip is completed	E1	31.08.2011	on-going	photos on national press conference and trip	1 PR: E1-3/a-d MTR: E1-2
1 international press conference with trip is completed	E1	31.08.2011	not started yet		
several press releases are completed	E1	31.08.2011	on-going	list of media coverage, 5 selected articles, presentation	1 PR: E1-1, E1-2/a-e, G/b MTR: E1-1 E1-3/1-6
website is set up	E2	31.01.2007	completed 02.04.2007	webpage in Hungarian and English	1 PR: E2-1/a-b

website is in operation with min. 30000 visitors per year	E2	31.08.2011	on-going	www.pusztaitolgyesek.hu, usage statistics	1 PR: E2-2 MTR: E2-1
educational programme (5 forest lessons, 1 summer camp, 1 Nature Trail programme) is completed	E3	31.05.2008	on-going	questionnaire, photos on 'Nagykőrös Days', correspondence with schools, evaluation of inquiry, photo on exhibition stand and archery contest, presentation	1 PR: E3-1, E3-2/a-b, E3-3, E3-4, E4-2, E4-3/a-b, 1 PR: G/c
1 'Train the trainer' programme, teaching aid book in 500 copies) is compiled	E3	31.05.2008	on-going	draft teaching aid booklet, photos on networking	1 PR: E3-5, E3-6/a-c
a brochure on the educational centre programme (15000 copies), is completed	E4	31.08.2011	on-going		
9 occasion with min. 100-150 participants	E4	31.08.2011	on-going	photos, poster	MTR: E4-5/1-7
establishment of the educational part of the website is completed	E4	no deadline foreseen	completed 02.04.2007	education webpage, usage statistics	1 PR: E4-1 MTR: E4-1/1-2 E2-2/1-2
75 forest lessons, 180 Nature Trail programmes, 9 summer camps are completed	E5	31.08.2011	on-going	photos, visitors statistics	MTR: E5-1/1-2 E5-2/1-4
6 'Train the trainer' programmes are completed	E5	31.08.2011	not started yet		
10000 website visitors	E5	31.08.2011	on-going	usage statistics	1 PR: E2-2
1 conference with 75 participants, conference proceedings (500 items)	E6	31.07.2011	not started yet		

participation and presentation in conferences (in topics of botany, forestry, nature protection and conferences of green NGOs - altogether 4 occasions)	E6	31.07.2011	on-going	presentations on the project to professional audience	1 PR: G/d-h MTR: E6-1 E6-2
the edition of monograph (1000 copies), CD on steppe oak forests (500 copies)	E6	31.07.2011	not started yet		
study trips (on 3 occasions for 30 participants) is completed	E6	31.07.2011	on-going	photos on trip on 13.10.2007.	1 PR: E6-1/a-b
1 freely accessible Nature Trail is ready with guide book (8000 copies)	E7	31.03.2008	completed 31.05.2008	map on track of Nature Trail and bicycle route, photos, MEANINGS??, Nature Trail booklet	1 PR: E7-1 MTR: E7-1/1-5 E7-2 E7-3
Layman's report	E8	31.07.2011	not started yet		
effective project implementation	F1	31.08.2011	on-going	minutes and photo of annual project opening workshops	1 PR: F1-1/a-b MTR: F1-1/1-3
Advisory Board field trip (altogether 5 occasions) is finished	F1	31.08.2011	on-going	photos on trip on 08.05.2007. photos on 26.11.2008 session	1 PR: E1-3/a-d MTR: F1-2/1-2
20 sample areas in 10X10 m squares, a basic survey and 3-year data series for the 3 management elements and their research report is completed	F2	31.03.2011.	on-going	studies, maps, photos	1 PR: F2-1, F2-2, F2-3, F2-4/a-b, F2-5, F2-6/a-b, F2-7, F2-8 MTR: F2-F3-1 F2-F3-2 F2-F3-3/1-4 (on DVD) F2-F3-4/1-2

10, 10X10 sample squares (botanical, including mosses and lichens, at least 5 Arthropoda taxa), a basic survey and 3-year data series, the examination of 3 tree trunk per year and their research report is compiled	F3	31.03.2011	on-going	studies, maps, photos	1 PR: F3-1, F3-3, F3-5, F3-6, F3-7, F3-8, F3-9 MTR: F2-F3-1 F2-F3-2 F2-F3-3/1-4 (on DVD) F2-F3-4/1-2
After-LIFE conservation plan is completed	F4	31.08.2011.	not started yet		

4. Technical progress

Table of technical progress on project actions by 31.01.20079

1.	2.	3.	4.
Action	**Deadline**	**Status**	**Description**
A1 - Establishment of the project system	31.12.2006	completed 08.05.2007	○ kick-off meeting is held ○ Partnership Agreement is bound ○ new staff is recruited (ranger, educational coordinator) ○ equipment is acquired (1 4WD car, 2 notebooks, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera) ○ project information brochure is edited (10000 items - 9000 in Hungarian 1000 in English) ○ 2 information boards are erected ○ Advisory Board is set up
A2 - Brand design of the project	31.12.2006	completed 28.09.2007	○ logo and design of the program is created ○ promotional material is prepared (700 folder, 700 pen, 700 textile bag, 1000 magnet, 10000 sticker)
A3 - Preparation of the reconstruction of the buildings	31.03.2007	completed 20.12.2007	○ authorised final plans of the reconstruction of the buildings and its surroundings are compiled ○ public tendering procedure is implemented
A4 - Preparation of the conservational management actions	31.03.2007	completed: 325 ha 22.12.2008 not started yet on the rest of 405 ha of target site	○ exact management needs by forest compartments are documented ○ new forestry management plans are compiled in which the management needs and change of function is included ○ planned management is agreed by the forest owners, managers ○ 5 public tendering procedure is completed for 325 ha

A5 - Elaboration of the conservational management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site	31.07.2011	not started yet	
B1 - Taking over the restricted right of disposal of habitats Euro-Siberian steppe woods and Pannonic sand steppes	31.08.2011	on-going	○ 6 detailed pre-contracts are bound with forest owners and managers on the take-over of the restricted right of disposal of habitats Euro-Siberian steppe woods and Pannonic sand steppes, for 90 years (17.12.2007.) ○ 6 final contracts are bound (12.08.2008)
C1 - Removal of arboreal invasive species using mechanical and chemical methods	31.03.2008	completed: 325 ha 31.10.2008 not started yet on the rest of 405 ha of target site	○ Arboreal invasive species are harvested on 325 ha land. Freshly cut surface of stumps have been treated with chemical in order to reduce the amount of stump sprouts in the season coming. (01.09.2008-31.10.2008)
C2 - Artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species	31.05.2008	on-going	○ cca. 60 ha of land formerly planted by arboreal invasive species has been planted by indigenous species (01.11.2008-15.04.2009)
C3 - Natural forest regeneration with the exclusion of game	31.12.2007	on-going	○ 233 ha is getting fenced around by 25006 m long fence of 3 types: permanent, temporary and electric fence
C4 - Reconstruction of building complex for educational and ecotouristical purposes	31.05.2008	completed: reconstruction 05.06.2008 on-going: equipment	○ Both the building and its surroundings are reconstructed. It was inaugurated on 05.06.2008

D1 - Treatment of herbaceous invasives, follow-up treatment of arboreal invasives	30.11.2010	not started yet	First year of post-treatment is contracted
D2 - Follow-up treatment of artificial forest regeneration	30.11.2010	not started yet	First year of post-treatment is contracted
E1 - Information to the general public - Media work	31.08.2011	on-going	○ continuous media presence is achieved ○ 1 opening press conference and press trip for the national media is held (08.05.2007.) ○ press conference and press trip for the national media is held to the inauguration of Educational Centre (05.06.2008)
E2 - Information to the general public - Website	31.08.2011	on-going	○ website is set (02.04.2007.) ○ links are established ○ website continuously operates (cc. 50 000 visitors)
E3 - Development of programmes for the educational centre	31.05.2008	on-going	○ questionnaire inquiry on environmental education needs of locals (181 items) ○ information exchange within national parks and other LIFE-programs
E4 - Communication of the educational programme to target groups	31.08.2011	on-going	○ establishment of education webpage (cca. 2000 visitors) ○ communication with local educators and target groups ○ presence in local media presence ○ participation in local events with stand

E5 - Starting up the educational programme and continuous operation of the educational centre	31.08.2011	on-going	○ 4 'outdoor school' classes ○ 317 guided visitors on Nature Trail
E6 - Mutual communication aiming at different groups of professionals and dissemination of scientific results	31.07.2011	on-going	○ project was presented at professional conferences, meetings (7 presentations) ○ field trip for 20 NGO members is held (13.10.2007.)
E7 - Development of a Nature Trail	31.03.2008	completed 05.06.2008	○ track of Nature Trail (1800 m) and an additional bicycle route (2700 m) are inaugurated.
E8 - Compilation of Layman's report	31.07.2011	not started yet	
F1 - Project operation, organizing cooperation with the partners	31.08.2011	on-going	○ communication between partners is continuous and effective ○ annual project opening workshops were held ○ thematic workshops were organized ○ Advisory Board participated in field trip ○ local office is rented ○ project equipment is in operation
F2 - Conservation management monitoring	31.03.2011	on-going	○ vegetation sample plots (20) were designated in 2007 and supplemented with 5 more in 2008 ○ vegetation quadrants were sampled in 2007 and 2008 ○ pitfall traps (85 items) and window traps (4 items) operated in 2007, pitfall tarps (40 items) and 2008 ○ game monitoring was carried out in 2007

F3 - Monitoring of biological status of habitat types of community importance	31.03.2011	on-going	○ sample plots (10) were designated ○ vegetation quadrants were sampled in 2007 and 2008 ○ pitfall traps operated in 2007 (45 items) and 2008 (30 items) and window traps (1 item) operated in 2007 ○ survey on weevils, longicorn beetles, orthoptera, moths were implemented in 2007 and 2008 ○ dead wood material was examined in 2007
F4 - Continuation of the activities after project completion and preparation of an After-LIFE conservation plan	31.08.2011	not started yet	

Description of technical progress on project actions by 31.01.2009.

A1 - Establishment of the project system

Expected results:

- official leaders and stakeholders are informed on the project
- personnel is recruited
- local office is rented
- necessary equipment is purchased
- Advisory Board is set
- a full-colour brochure introducing the project in Hungarian and English languages, in 10000 copies
- 2 information boards

Achievements:

- official leaders and stakeholders are informed on the project
- personnel is recruited (ranger, educational coordinator)
- local office is rented (Nagykőrös, Kálvin Square 6.)
- necessary equipment is purchased (4 WD car, 2 laptops, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera)
- Advisory Board is set
- a full-colour brochure introducing the project in Hungarian and English languages, in 10000 copies is issued
- 2 information boards are erected

Action status: completed

Description:

There are three organizations cooperating in HUNSTEPPICOAKS project. Firstly, the leaders of the partners were officially informed about the fact that the European Commission supports the project. The kick-off meeting of the project with the project participants was held 05.10.2006 in DINPI central office. Here, the project was presented (by Katalin Sipos and Zsolt Baranyai, DINPI staff) and the detailed operative rules of the cooperation were discussed (draft Partnership Agreement) as well as essential documentation of project implementation (final version, financial handbook, etc.) was given to the partners. For the list of participants and minutes of the occasion, see **Annex PR1 A1-1**. The final version of the Partnership Agreement determining the operative rules of cooperation was signed trilaterally on 31.01.2007. (a copy of this document was sent to the Commission on 02.05.2007.). Responsible person: Annamária Csóka

The new project personnel indicated in the proposal (ranger: István Justin, educational coordinator: Beáta Papp) was recruited on 16.10.2006. For their official task descriptions, see **Annex PR1 A1-2**.

We have been renting a local office in Nagykőrös since 01.03.2007. Originally, we aimed to rent a furnished office near the town centre or the project site, which is easy to access for locals.

However, as Nagykőrös is a small town with restricted possibilities in this respect, finally we found a suitable building (which is situated at the market place, within easy reach of everyone), but we had to modestly furnish it, partly charged to the project. The office is approx. 80 m^2. It includes a bureau, where our ranger and educational coordinator occasionally work and the meetings are held, a so-called Green Point Office (part of the national Green Point Network), where people can get information on the project itself or on other conservational, environmental issues as well as take brochures on these topics free of charge. The office contains a small room suitable for overnight stays for the personnel or researchers spending a longer period in the project area. For photos on the office see **Annex PR1 A1-3/a-d.** Responsible person: Beáta Papp

Necessary equipment for the project was purchased by 30.03.2007. The 4 WD car (Ford Ranger, see photo in **Annex PR1 A1-4**), 1 laptop, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera are used by the ranger and educational coordinator of DINPI and 1 laptop is by the project personnel of WWF. Responsible person: István Justin

The Advisory Board (which consists of the members of DINPI National Park Council) was asked for the task of the scientific coordination of the project on 20.11.2006. On 16.02.2007., the Council accepted the request and Prof. Dr. Gábor Fekete (academic, ecologist and expert of the steppe oaks) was appointed leader of the Steppe Oaks Advisory Board (for these documents see **Annex PR1 A1-5/a-b)**. The foundation meeting was held in our local office on 08.05.2007., where the project was introduced to the members through a presentation (for the memorandum and photo of the occasion see **Annex PR1 A1-6/a, A1-6/b** and list of presentations in **Annex PR 1 G and G/a**). As on the same date the first press conference and trip were also held, the members of the Advisory Board participated in these. Responsible person: Annamária Csóka

The project introductory brochures were edited by 14.03.2007., 9000 item in Hungarian, 1000 item in English (for the final version of the brochure see **Annex PR1 A1-7/a-b**, and also **Annex PR1 A2-3**, **one Hungarian and English brochure was attached to the progress report**). The state authorities as MEW, SFS, local stakeholders (forest owners, managers, forestry company, educational institutions, etc.) were also sent brochures for their information. For the united brochure distribution list of partners see **Annex MTR A1-1**. As we have savings in this budget and the brochure is popular, we plan to re-issue it in the second half of the project. Responsible: WWF

Two boards were erected providing information on HUNSTEPPICOAKS project. On the two sides of each board, in Hungarian and in English, the short description of the project and information on LIFE-Nature and Natura 2000 can be read (see final versions of the texts in **Annex PR1 A1-9/a-b**). One of the boards is located at the market place, which is near town centre and locals visit the place in high numbers (apparently, it is in the neighbourhood of our rented office, see photo in **Annex PR1 A1-10/a**). The other board is erected on the corner of the Pálfája forest compartment, where the future Educational Centre is located (see photo in **Annex PR1 A1-10/b**). The photos were taken on the inauguration of the boards, on 22.03.2007., with the participation of project members. Responsible: NKÖ

A2 - Brand design of the project

Expected results:

- identifiable and distinctive project logo and graphical elements that make up an easy-to-understand, nice and consistent brand design
- different types of promotion objects in altogether 3000-3500 pieces

Achievements:

- project logo was designed and it is in use
- graphical elements that make up an easy-to-understand, nice and consistent brand design were elaborated and used to create the project website, the information brochure and the promotional material
- different types of promotion objects decorated with the logo of the LIFE programme and with that of the project were obtained: 700 pcs of pens, 700 pcs of textile bags, 700 pcs of folders, 1000 pcs of fridge magnets and 10,000 pcs of colour stickers

Action status: completed

Description:

WWF Hungary implemented the creation of the project brand in cooperation with the partners. To define the unified message of the logo and design as well as harmonize the styles required for different uses and target groups (e.g. professionals, general public, children) a personal meeting was organized with the participation of the communication staff of WWF and DINPI on 28.11.2006 (responsible Klára Kerpely).

Three professional graphic designers were contracted to create and present on drafts different ideas for the possible project logo and the graphical elements for the brand design. We evaluated the received drafts involving the project partners and then the author of the best proposal received the contract for the elaboration of the selected draft with graphic elements for different uses.

However, another proposal for the digital design elements was also rewarded and used as a basis for the project website design.

The final logo package was elaborated and delivered by 27.02.2007. Final version of the logo was attached to the 1st Progress Report (**Annex PR1 A2-1**).

The defined budget for promotional material allowed us to obtain 3100 promotional objects of higher value and 10000 colour stickers. The promotional materials were delivered by 30.04.2007, with the exception of the paper folder. The producer firm of this object, which had given us the best offer, later faced serious business problems and could not produce the objects. We had to contract another company, which finally delivered the folders by 28.09.2007.

The acquisition of a wide range of objects makes possible to use them for several purposes, such us events and interactive on-line activities for the general public, representation activities of the project, involving experts, partners, stakeholders and decision-makers. The promotional material is used by all members of the partnership, however WWF Hungary is coordinating its distribution. The distribution plan of the material and the present status matrix of distribution are attached in **Annex MTR A2-1.**

The logo of the LIFE programme and that of the project appear on all promotional objects. On larger objects the logo of the Natura 2000 network and that of all project participants and co-financiers, together with the URL of the project website also appear. Photo of the promotional objects is in **Annex PR1 A2-3. An item of pen, textile bag, folder, fridge magnet and colour sticker was attached to the 1st Progress Report.**

A3 - Preparation of the reconstruction of the buildings

Expected results:

- authorised reconstruction plan for the buildings of 'Pálfája' forest, which meets the environmental educational requirements both in appearance and function.

Achievements:

- authorised reconstruction plan for the buildings and their surroundings in 'Pálfája' forest, which meets the environmental educational requirements both in appearance and function.

Action status: completed

Description:

For drafting the reconstruction plans for the main building, outbuilding and the surrounding area of planned Pálfája Educational Centre, former existing plans for the reconstruction for public welfare purposes (submitted also in the appendix of the project proposal) created a good base. NKÖ, DINPI and occasionally WWF participated at the meetings concerning the planning period of the reconstruction (in office and field e.g. on 22.03.2007.), see photos in **Annex PR1 A3-1/a-b**.

The drafts were designed for a medium-scale renovation. To comply with environmental educational needs, new plans were drafted by a designer charged by NKÖ, which included the solar collectors and the possibility for selective garbage collecting, composting, removal of concrete paving from the courtyard, etc. The plans contained, that buildings would be also accessible for disabled visitors with the help of ramps and special washroom. The plan included the following rooms: main building: warming-up kitchen, employing hall, washrooms (for washing hands only), institutor's room; outbuildings: toilets for women and men, (half) open-air showers. For the plans see **Annex PR1 A3-2/a-b, copies of plans are attached to the 1st Progress Report**. The planned arrangement of the surroundings can be studied on the function map of the garden, which can be found in **Annex PR1 A3-2/c**). The authorisation of the agreed plans was the task of the NKÖ (as owner, property manager of the site).

The public tendering procedure was organised by NKÖ. DINPI, as beneficiary charged an external public tendering consulting company to supervise the whole process of the procedure. (This is compulsory according to the public tendering rules when EU support is used in a certain project. Its cost was not foreseen during the compilation of the procedure.) The date of the call for tender was 28.09.2007., the date of the compilation of the summary on the procedure was 10.12.2007. In the call the following elements were included (for the detailed list see the official summary of the public tendering procedure, in **Annex PR1 A3-3**):

- strengthening on the statistics of the main building (201 m^2)
- architectural works on the main building (e.g. development of a new roof, isolation)
- building in new sanitary ware into side-buildings (toilets 40 m^2, 8 showers);
- inner and outer electric works in the main and side buildings

- mechanical works in the main and side buildings as well as in the garden (water system, solar collectors, etc.)

- arranging in the garden (e.g. entrance and side gate, fence, bicycle storage, table, bench) and in Pálfája forest compartment (see-saw, swing, tables, benches, etc.)

The procedure was valid, however, a problem arose: the 3 bid offers received were all above the amount foreseen in the proposal to a high extent (The lowest bit offer was net 29 149 555 HUF, which equals 115034 EUR, with the exchange rate of 03.12.2007.). Finally, the next meeting of NKÖ board of representatives set this problem in the agenda and on 22.11.2007. this institution accepted that the remaining net 9599555 HUF will be given by NKÖ's own budget for the reconstruction works (not as part of the project expenses). However, a part of this extra expenditure was foreseen in our proposal as first gardening, mowing and waste removal, hence we consider it as eligible. In addition, according to Commission's correspondence a part of this amount of extra cost can be replaced in NKÖ's own contribution. (For the decision of the board see **Annex PR1 A3-4**.) Thus the contracting date with the winning company was 20.12.2007. The reconstruction works (thus Action C4) launched at the beginning of January 2008. The inauguration of the furnished educational complex and its surroundings, together with the Nature Trail was on 05.06.2008 (see Action C4, E1, E7).

A4 - Preparation of the conservational management actions

Expected results:

The results of the preparation and authorisation of modified forest management plans are the following:

- the fragments of priority habitat types get the primarily protection function instead of a primarily economic function
- the preconditions for the nature conservational management actions are established in accordance with the actual forestry management plan
- on the basis of fieldwork the preparation of detailed contracts and public tendering is finished

Achievements:

The results of the preparation and authorisation of modified forest management plans are the following:

- the fragments of priority habitat types got the primarily protection function instead of a primarily economic function
- the preconditions for the nature conservational management actions are established in accordance with the actual forestry management plan
- on the basis of fieldwork the preparation of detailed contracts is ready
- public tendering is launched, and completed and contracted in case of 325 ha for management Actions C1, C2, C3 and the first season of D1, D2.

Action status: on-going, delayed

Description:

The compilation of the subsequent forestry management plans of the project area was due in 2006-2007. As it was not a modification of valid plans but compilations of new ones (valid for the next 10 years), after discussing with the forest managers DINPI itself could negotiate with SFS, competent forestry authority. (It was not the forest manager, who should have applied for the modifications of the plans, as it was foreseen in the project proposal.)

Preliminary talks with forest managers and SFS took place during the preparation of project proposal. Negotiations on the forestry management plans of the supported project launched at the beginning of October, 2006. After presenting the main guidelines, on the subsequent occasions (initiated usually by SFS) SFS representatives and DINPI staff visited each forest compartment in the project site, which took turn with office meetings. The list of the meetings in the above topic is the following:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
06.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (office)	discussion on the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
24.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
25.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
26.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
08.11.2006.	Pusztavacs (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
09.11.2006.	Pusztavacs (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
13.11.2006.	Cegléd (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
20.11.2006.	Cegléd (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
11.12.2006.	Cegléd (office)	discussion on forest management plan content of each forest compartment	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
24.01.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	reconciliation with forest management plan content of each forest compartment	forest managers, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
19.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	taking soil samples from 115 C forest compartment	István Nagy, István Justin (DINPI)
09.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (office)	discussion on the draft forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
04.07.2007.	Nagykőrös (office)	reconciliation with NEFAG	representatives of NEFAG, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
11.07.2007.	Nagykőrös (office)	discussion on the draft forest management plans	representatives of SFS, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
24.07.2007.	Pusztavacs (office)	closing session on forest management plans	representatives of SFS, István Justin (DINPI)

The detailed fieldwork with the authority guarantees that conservational management works (elimination of invasives and forest transformation) foreseen in the proposal are authorized to implement in each forest compartment.

SFS also slightly altered the boundaries and numbering of forest compartments during the compilation phase, for changes see map in **Annex PR1 A4-1/a-b**.

SFS is also the soil protection authority in the project area. As a part of the compilation of the forestry management plans, the 'principal aim' was foreseen to change from 'forest for wood production' to 'forest for soil protection'. (This latter expression means that because of unfavourable site conditions, the cover can decrease to 30 % without reforestation liability). SFS agreed with the change of the category in the cases of open steppe oak forests forming mosaics with sandy grassland patches, however, in compartments with more closed forest stands, the change was rejected. For this reason in these areas the cover can decrease only to 70 %.

However, the fencing off in these compartments can bring substantial changes on the regeneration conditions (it is presumably strongly supported if the game population is eliminated) and the 70% cover may be reached. If the natural processes head for the opening of the forests here, thus the decrease of the 70% cover, DINPI will initiate reconciliations with the SFS for the modification of the 'principal aim' of even these compartments (the modification of forestry management plans) For the map of forest aim categories see the map in **Annex PR1 A4-2.**

On Commission's request (25.02.2008) of clarifying the issues on the classification of forest stands described above, we have to underline the following facts. Solely the level of canopy closure accepted by SFS without obligation of reforestation is the distinctive character of 'forest for soil protection' and 'forest with economic aim'. Presence or absence of primacy of conservation issues is independent of the above status of forests. Opportunity of conservational management on a particular site does not depend on the state of it according to the categories in question, but on conservation status (pSCI or not, protected or not) and agreements with owners/managers. Since the classification of SFS is rigid and usually does not include special cases for conservation aspects, denominations of these categories are misleading. Similarly, the removal of arboreal invasives within the frame of present project - for want of better - was authorized by SFS as 'sanitary harvest', which term is otherwise used for removal of unhealthy tree individuals.

Following Commission's request, we present the table below indicating the present spread of areas with different SFS categories.

	Forest for soil protection (ha)	Forest with economic aim (ha)	Others (cleaning, slit, ploughland) (ha)
Leased land	94	76	5
NEFAG land	50	80	3
Erdő Bt. land	2	15	-
Faith-Wood Kft.	-	6	-

Besides the above lands, the target site contains 'Pálfája' (forest for public welfare, 60 ha) and 'Strázsa-hegy' (conservation area, 28 ha).

We see neither chance nor urgent need to improve the rate of 'forests for soil protection', although it would do the artificial forest regenerations easier to pass by SFS, as this category requires less cover (30 % instead of 70 %). Please note, that latter aspect is one of authorization and not of conservation. In case we experience on a longer run the decrease of canopy closure on forests with economic aim on e.g. climatic basis, we will initiate to conciliations again on the state of such sites. Nevertheless, we don't consider this happening during the project period.

In the case of a certain forest compartment, 115 C (leased), soil samples were taken (as an additional cost not foreseen for this action) to justify the supposition that the soil conditions of this compartment do not enable the regeneration of forests at all. The survey proved that there is a soil layer (below 50 cm depth), which contains hidrocarbonate in a high concentration. Here, owing to the fact that the roots of seedlings spread in this layer and they cannot reach the water table as well as in the region generally there is precipitation shortage, successful regeneration is impossible to achieve. SFS accepted the result of the survey and took out this compartment under any forestry use. In the case of another compartment, a similar problem may rise (leased, 140 B). In this compartment there are two patches where this problem may occur. The larger one of the patches consists of weakly grown oak individuals and a low grown but closed indigenous shrub-layer (mostly *Ligustrum vulgare*) with only a few individuals of invasive species. Considering both the condition of oaks and the low level of invasives in this patch we decided not trying artificial forest regeneration. Opening the closed indigenous shrub-layer would most certainly lead to colonization of invasives, without any chance of successful forest regeneration. According to

negotiations with local assign of SFS, he will support taking this patch out of forestry use to 'Shrub' category. Just as 'Clearing', 'Shrub' is such a subcategory within 'Forest' form of land use category which doesn't have forest on it. The other patch of 140 B compartment is smaller and among similarly weakly grown oaks individuals, a dense layer of invasive *Amorpha fruticosa* is present. In this case, parallel to removal of invasives, we decided to try to reforest it.

For an example of a newly compiled forestry management plan see **Annex PR1 A4-3.** (We have presently the digital format of the new forestry management plans, because these have not arrived yet in paper format up to 31.01.2009 from SFS.)

The fence building was also negotiated with the authority. It forms part of another authorisation procedure, initiated by DINPI, as conservational manager of Natura 2000 sites. The permission is given in every case as the purpose of fence is game exclusion. The SFS adjudicated to permit on 26.08.2008 (**Annex MTR A4-1**). The authorization of logging operation related to the construction, however, is another procedure, which must be managed by the forest manager. This is under process, in cases it is necessary.

The owners consented to the execution of conservation management works in the overwhelming majority of the planned areas. However, they insisted on the construction of temporary fences in the forest reconstruction areas, due to the excessive game population (which is underpinned also by the results of game monitoring of 2007, see on **Annex PR1 F2-7 on CD**). For this reason the mobile electric fences and game repellents are changed for fences with presumably higher expenses (which are to be classified to infrastructure costs).

DINPI reserved other field days for the compilation of the detailed content of the technical documentation for the public tendering procedure, which practically meant visits and estimations on each forest compartments. The list of field trips as follows:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
31.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of the data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
02.11.2006.	Nagykőrös (field)	visit on forest compartments, discussing the content of the data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
23.01.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
08.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI), László Gálhidy (WWF)
14.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
21.02.2007.	Budapest (office)	preliminary discussion on public tendering	Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
06.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
07.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin (DINPI)
10.04.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, István Nagy (DINPI)
12.04.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin (DINPI), László Gálhidy (WWF)

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
25.04.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin (DINPI), László Gálhidy (WWF)
22.05.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
14.08.2007.	Nagykőrös (field)	detailed estimations in each forest compartments on the basis of data forms	István Justin, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)

DINPI compiled a data sheet that contains all the relevant information for the technical material of the public tendering procedure by forest compartments (see an example in **Annex PR1 A4-4/a** and photo **PR1 A4-4/b**) and also technical descriptions. As a result of negotiations on forestry management plans, technical description became different at some points to that of the project proposal (for details see Action C1, C2, C3)

We hired an external public tendering company for the implementation of the whole tendering procedure, as it is compulsory in the case of EU project support according to the Hungarian regulations, Law on Public Tendering, which need was not foreseen during the compilation of the procedure (and has an additional cost). Certainly, the technical material for the procedure is provided by DINPI.

From the viewpoint of public tendering procedures Action C1-D1, C2-D2 and in case of some procedures (see below) C3 were managed together.

According to the negotiations with the consulting company, we had to separate min. two sessions of public tendering procedures, in which we have to use completely different types of procedures on the basis of the status of the forest compartments. In case of leased areas, we had right to initiate tendering procedure of open character, as this right of DINPI is recorded in the contract of restricted right of disposal (see Action B1), signed by the owner as well as the forest manager. In case of areas which are not subjects of lease, the Hungarian law on forests gives the manager exclusive right for managing the area, which fact had to be taken into consideration when selecting the type of procedure. For this reason, these procedures were of inviting character, containing altogether 2 procedures (one by forest managers). 2 of altogether 4 forest managers concerned in the project did not subscripted to forest restructuring on their compartments directly neighbouring leased areas (**Annex MTR A4-2/1-4**). Since these compartments contain no patches of habitats of community importance, we didn't leased them, but thought of the as potential buffer zones. Although in such a procedure there is a single tenderer, DINPI has right not to accept the bids in case the offer is significantly higher than experienced in procedures with competing tenderers.

Altogether 5 procedures resulted in contract. For the summary of 5 procedures resulted in a contract, see **Annex MTR A4-3/1-5**

Procedure No. (generated for this report only)	1	2	3	4	5
Procedures which resulted in contract (please note: for D actions, procedures and contracts involve only the 1st year of post-treatment)	C1-D1 and C2-D2 on leased land (158 ha)	C1-D1, C2-D2 and C3 (8071 m fence) on un-leased land (133 ha) (forest manager: NEFAG)	C1-D1, C2-D2 and C3 (2250 m fence) on un-leased land (15 ha) (forest manager: Erdő Bt.)	C1-D1 and C2-D2 on leased (17 ha) and un-leased (6 ha) land, C3 (14666 m fence) on leased land (forest manager on un-leased land: Faith-Wood Kft.)	C3 (14685 m fence) on leased (14317 m) and un-leased (368 m) land (forest manager on un-leased: NEFAG)
type of procedure(s)	open invited	invited	invited	open	invited invited
result	open: none of the bidding documentations were valid invited: contract	contract	contract	contract only on : C1-D1 and C2-D2 on leased (17 ha) and un-leased (6 ha) land. Bids on fence construction were invalid or very high	1st invited: cancelled due to lack of enough bids 2nd invited: 2 contract for 2 sub-areas, with the same tenderer
date of launch	open: 27.12.2007 invited: 19.05.2008	23.06.2008	14.07.2008	03.07.2008	1st invited: 30.10.2008 2nd invited: 17.11.2008
date of contract	03.07.2008	31.07.2008	01.09.2008	24.09.2008	22.12.2008
start of implementation	01.09.2008	01.09.2008	01.09.2008	01.10.2008	01.01.2009
end of implementation	31.12.2009	31.12.2009	31.12.2009	31.12.2009	15.04.2009

In respect of the objects of different procedures, particularly in case of fence construction, the implementation of tendered activities is connected to each other for practical reasons. There are fences in which different sections are subjects of different public tendering procedure types. Thus, launch dates and deadlines of implementation were synchronized as far as possible.

For an overview of managers and leasing state on the target site, see **Annex MTR A4-8.**

During the procedures No. 1, 4 and 5 the following factors delayed the process.

In Procedure 1 all the bids had shortcoming of providing all the necessary documents, so all the bids were invalid. On Commission's request (13.06.2008) we emphasis, that the necessary documents were not provided, although there were clearly requested in the tendering documentation; thus the mistake lies on the site of offering parties. For the minutes and summary of the Board reviewed the offers, see **Annex MTR A4-4/1-2.** This is why a new procedure began with invitation of all the tenderers of the open procedure. Because of this delay, the schedule of implementation got modified in the Technological Documentation.

Procedure 1 included all the leased land except for compartment 136 C. This is the compartment which replaces 108 A, 103 B, 104 A, B, E forest compartments in the target area (for reasons, see below), public tendering became possible only after Commission's approval on change of the target area. Hence compartment 136 C became object of another procedure (No. 4), launched later.

In Procedure 4 the forest manager of the un-leased fragment (compartment 173 L) consented to hiring an open procedure. The bids on fence construction were significantly higher than either pre-calculated or acceptable considering the project budget. On this score DINPI contracted only parts of the tender referring to Action C1-D1, C2-D2 (the structure of this tender made it possible), and decided to initiate a new procedure on fence construction (Procedure 5). Considering the assessed costs of fence construction of DINPI within a year, the Hungarian Law on Public Tendering allows of a simplified procedure of invited character. After inviting 4 tenderers, it cleared up that only 2 of them intended to make an offer. In view of bids on fence construction in Procedure 4, it seemed inevitable to create competition among the tenderers. To achieve this, we invited 2 more tenderers, so finally we got 4 bids, which resulted in a much lower final offer than that in Procedure 4, although it was still higher than estimated in the Technological Documentation. For Procedure 5, we rationalized the track of fence around two neighbouring lands, 140 B (leased) and 56 B (un-leased, NEFAG) forest compartments. For the following explanation please see **Annex MTR A4-6**, which helps understanding. In a primary version these two compartments were planned to be fenced with using a section of an existing but very low quality fence on one side of 56 B, and at the same time establishing a section separating the two affected compartments, as this track is the border of leased land. However, in respect of the section with the existing fence around 56 B, NEFAG consented to hiring a procedure with tenderers invited by DINPI (**Annex MTR A4-5**). As a result of this, 140 B and 56 B will be joint as a fenced area with new, temporary fence. The extra length of the modified track is only 19 m. Since we contracted oak nut deposition in 56 B (Procedure 2, see also Action C2), it is inevitable to have it properly fenced in order to exclude the heavy nut consumer wild boars, which condition is not assured by the existing low quality section planned to be integrated earlier. Other two sections of fence around 56 B was contracted earlier in Procedure 2.

During the implementation of Action A4, the following problems rose:

108 A, 103 B, 104 A, B, E forest compartments are in the property of cc. 140 forest landowners. We planned to lease also this compartment in the original proposal, for this reason, the official leader of the landowners in that period signed the pre-contract (attached to the project proposal).

However, the landowners changed their leader in 2007. Subsequently, DINPI presented the project on one occasion as well as sent again official information letters (for the new leader and every owner) on the management actions to be implemented on the area of the landowners. Despite all these efforts, at the next official meeting of landowners, the members (by voting) rejected the participation in the project**.**

We made steps to find cooperative forest owners, who possess further steppe oak habitats in good condition to lease and manage these as a substitution for the property of the landowners, and replaced it with 136 C forest compartment (of similar size as the dropped out ones).

On Commission's request (25.02.2008) we emphasize that forest compartment 136 C is located in the pSCI, and has similar quality as the replaced compartments.

The ownership of other forest compartments (98 A, B, C, D, E) are not regulated. (These are under local nature protection, initiated by NKÖ since the 1980s, the fact of its protection was enforced in 2004). In here the registered property manager is still the long-ago dissolved farmer's cooperative.

On Commission's request (25.02.2008) we confirm that we regard this land as part of the target site. Purchasing this land by DINPI from out of project budget is under process. About the third of it's 28,5 ha stretch belongs to several private owner. We contracted with the successor of a farmer's cooperative, which owns cca. two-third (23686/34770) of the land. Signing a contract with most of the private owner is going to happen in February 2009, but some of them are not willing to sell their property or not available. The problem is that an owner doesn't own distinct parts of this site, but it is a common property of them all in a determined proportion. This means that we can not see the date when 100 % of this land will belong to state and into the trusteeship of DINPI. In order to make the undertaken management besides the above circumstances possible to implement, we initiated registration of DINPI as the forest manager of the land. According to the reference of local SFS assign, this process will be completed in February 2009 (for the initiating letter see **Annex MTR A4-7**).

NEFAG agreed with the execution of the conservation management work on its property (see agreement in the annex of project proposal, we also had subsequent meetings with its representatives). However, the company seemingly intends to implement the works at a considerably higher price than the marketable value. They presumed on leasing their areas to us, however, in the case of a state organisation this is option was excluded. This is also a good reason why we intended to launch open procedures first: we were able to use the bid offers as financial orientation in the procedures of inviting character.

For maps of proposed and actual areas to manage see map in **Annex PR1 A4-5/a-b.** The target area has not changed since PR1.

We organized a workshop and field program with the aim of exchange of experiences in invasive management between national parks and external scientists of the topic in Hungary. (Also representatives of LIFE-Nature projects were present.) For the minutes of the occasion and photo see **Annex PR1 A4-6/a-b**.

In this action we are facing delay, for subsequent reasons and details please see Part: 5. Problems encountered.

A5 - Elaboration of the conservational management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' Natura 2000 site

Expected results:

Long-term management plan of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI is elaborated in digital and paper format as well as it is officially approved by the competent authority before end of the project. Basic and management data are recorded in GIS. The overview of the historical aspects - especially on forest use - are collected and analysed in a study.

Achievements: none

Action status: not started yet

B1 - Taking over the restricted right of disposal of habitats Euro-Siberian steppe woods and Pannonic sand steppes

Expected results:

Discontinuation of economic forest use on patches of habitats of community interest (altogether 175 hectares) as well as establishment of a long-term professional cooperation between the conservational manager and private owners

Achievements:

- 6 contract bound guaranteeing the discontinuation of economic forest use on patches of habitats of community interest (altogether 175 hectares) for 90 years as well as establishment of a long-term professional cooperation between the conservational manager and private owners
- Final contracts containing the precise square measure of leased lands were signed on 12.08.2008

Action status: completed

Description:

The project proposal included the agreements bound on the restricted right of disposal of habitats with the forest owners. For the compilation of the contract, which is valid for the next 90 years, DINPI hired an external real estate lawyer with remarkable experience gained in this field. (The reason for this act was: after submitting the proposal our law expert left the institute and was not replaced.) With this, additional costs not foreseen were added to this action. During the internal negotiations, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai drafted the elements to be included into the contract and the real estate lawyer converted these into the special language of law. During the reconciliations with the forest owners and managers, the external lawyer and DINPI staff answered the questions posed by the stakeholders, problems, certain cases were discussed and the elements required by the owners were included in the draft proposal.

We have to note, that the sort of contract initiated by DINPI (taking over restricted right of disposal over habitat types) is the first to be bound in Hungary. For this reason, we could not have learnt

from earlier experiences and as the contract is quite complex as well as valid for an extraordinary long term, this phase of the project proved to be very time-consuming.

For the list of negotiations, see the table below:

Date	Place	Topic	Participants
17.10.2006.	Nagykőrös (NKÖ office)	presentation of the concept of contract on restricted right of disposal over the habitats	forest owners, managers, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, Annamária Csóka (DINPI)
06.02.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	launch of the compilation of contract with the help of the external real estate law expert	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
27.02.2007.	Nagykőrös (NKÖ office)	reconciliation on the concept with the owners	forest owners, managers, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
01.03.2007.	Nagykőrös (NKÖ office)	reconciliation on the concept with the owners	forest owners, managers, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
10.08.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	discussion on the content of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
15.08.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	discussion on the content of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
16.08.2007.	Budapest (County Land Registry Authority)	discussion on the possibilities of the inclusion of restricted right of disposal into the land register	representatives of the County Land Registry Authority, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
29.08.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	reconciliation with forest owners on the content of contract	forest owners, managers, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
05.09.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	reconciliation with forest owners on the content of the contract	forest owners, managers, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)

20.09.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	further discussion on the detailed content of contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
04.10.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	reconciliation with forest owners on the content of the contract	forest owners, managers, real estate lawyer, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
15.10.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	further discussion on the detailed content of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
05.11.2007.	Budapest (DINPI office)	compilation of final version of the contract	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
04.12.2007.	Budapest (real estate lawyer's office)	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
05.12.2007.	Budapest (real estate lawyer's office)	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
06.12.2007.	Budapest real estate lawyer's office	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
07.12.2007.	Budapest (real estate lawyer's office)	final reconciliations on the text of the contract	real estate law expert, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
11.12.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	presentation of the final version of contract to owners, discussion	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai (DINPI)
13.12.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	final version of contract to owners, discussion	real estate lawyer, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)
17.12.2007.	Nagykőrös (project office)	contracting (pre-contract with approximate square measure of leased lands)	forest owners, managers, heads of DINPI, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin (DINPI)

12.08.2008	Nagykőrös (project office)	contracting (final contract with precise square measure of leased lands)	real estate lawyer, forest owners, managers, heads of DINPI, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, István Justin, György Verő (DINPI)

The contact founds value of assets right, right of common, for 90 years, documented in land registry.

The contracts signed on 17.12.2007 are formally pre-contracts, however, regarding their content those are finalised. The reason for this: the land registry authority indicated that if the lease does not refer to complete plot numbers, drafts on the leased areas have to be drawn by geodetic experts. This act took place in 2008 and resulted additional expenses in this action, which we could not have seen in the proposal.

On 12.08.2008 the final form was signed. While the previous regulated every aspect of the cooperation of the contractors and so enabled the launch of public tendering procedures, after preparing the sharing of plot numbers, only the latter could contain the precise square measure of leased lands, and consequently the exact measure of offset of restricted right of disposal.

Finally, 6 contracts were bound with the 4 forest owners, for the following reasons: one owner's mother has widow's right on the area to be leased, and a separate contract had to be compiled for her, one owner's wife has different owner's share on each plot numbers to be leased, and she has also her own contract. As in the tasks indicated in the contract forest managers also has responsibility, they also signed the contract (in fact, in 3 contracts as in the other cases the owner is also the manager).

For the text of pre-contract (one example) see **Annex PR1 B1-1/a on CD** and the photo on signing the pre-contract in **Annex PR1 B1-1/b**, for an example of final contract see **Annex MTR B1-2 on DVD**, for photo of signing the final contract, see **Annex MTR B1-1.**

The most important elements of the contract:

- the contract is valid from the date of contacting
- in the contract there are references on the Natura 2000 network, the conservation of steppe oaks and public interest of conservation
- forest owners are primary targets of the contract but it includes regulations for the forest managers as they have also responsibilities
- the owner has an obligation to inform the customers, inheritors, forest managers on the content of the contract
- the contract has to be registered in the land registry and in the forestry registry
- DINPI and its all-time successors are displayed in the contract
- the notice to quit is excluded regarding all-time owners/managers
- the owner/manager has to preserve the natural state of the area independently from the branch of cultivation (it can be forest, grassland, pasture but not ploughland)

- hunting objects, game ploughlands are not allowed to operate in the project area
- the reconciliations for preliminary decisions of special authorities (conservation, forestry) is the role of DINPI regarding the conservational aims and management included in the contract (also for the actions in the project and long term management plan)
- the wood originated from the management works is a property of the owner/manager, its transportation is the task of the party to the contract
- every benefit deriving from the proper use of the area concerns the party to the contract, DINPI will not establish a claim for these
- the owner/manager is obliged to avoid cases of double founding
- all the landuse plans of the area has to be previously approved by the DINPI and it can interpose veto for conservation damage uses
- the owner has an obligation that he continuously charges a forest manager on the area
- during 90 years, the tasks connected to the forest manager's status have to be accomplished by the forest managers at their own expenses (compilations of forest management plans, data providing, etc.)
- the contracting party takes into consideration that the conservation management works of the project are contracted as a result of public tendering procedures; he accepts that he is not exclusively entitled for the implementation of the management works, however, he is obliged to participate in the authorisation phase
- the forest manager has a right to make a bid offer for the public tendering procedures

During our work, we faced the following problem:

108 A, 103 B, 104 A, B, E forest compartments are in the property of cc. 140 forest landowners. We planned to lease also this compartment in the original proposal, for this reason the official leader of the landowners of that period signed the pre-contract (attached to project proposal). However, the landowners changed their leader this year. Subsequently, DINPI presented the project on one occasion as well as sent again official information letters (for the new leader and every owner) on the management actions to be implemented on the area of the landowners. Despite all these efforts, at the next official meeting of landowners, the members (by voting) rejected the participation in the project**.**

We made steps to find cooperative forest owners, who possess further steppe oak habitats in good condition to lease these as a substitution for the property of the landowners and replaced these with 136 C forest compartment. As a result of this, the contracts cover 175 ha altogether.

On Commission's request (25.02.2008) we emphasize that forest compartment 136 C is located in the pSCI, and has similar quality as the replaced compartments.

For the map of the areas indicated in the project and actually taken over please see **Annex PR1 B1-2**.

C1 - Removal of arboreal invasive species using mechanical and chemical methods

Expected results:

Considerable repress of invasive species, the decrease of load of invasives on Euro-Siberian steppic oak forests and Pannonic sand steppes and regeneration of grasslands on the total project area (altogether 405 hectare).

Achievements:

- 77 % of arboreal invasives are removed on 325 ha
- 70 % of logging waste is eliminated

Action status: on-going, delayed

Description:

The subcontractor was chosen by public tendering process, as described in Action A4. A detailed description of applicable methods of removal of arboreal invasives was part of the public tendering documentation.

As a result of negotiations with SFS on forestry management plans, forest owners and managers (Action A4), methods described in the project proposal were modified, since SFS testified its doubts on testing some of the new management methods in such a wide extent.

Each individual of arboreal non-indigenous species above 5 cm of stem diameter were stem cut. After its preparation at the site of cut, the wood material was transported by machine power, taking care of the vegetation as much as possible. Pulling unprepared logs was allowed only on artificial forest regeneration areas without grassland of conservation value. Soon after the start of implementation it became clear that the manual transportation we had expected in many cases would have lead to serious delay of exploitation, considering the volume of the action and the seasonal limits of implementation.

Indigenous shrub-layer was treated differently according as it was in an artificial forest regeneration patch or not. In prior case it was mostly harvested, left standing only bigger size individuals and those within small patches of oaks. In the latter case the indigenous shrub-layer was protected and merely damaged where it was either unavoidable, or necessary according to labour safety regulations, due to their proximity to harvested tree individuals.

Places for storage of wood material were marked in consideration of least possible damage of vegetation by transportation both to the storage and from the storage by the forest manager.

Within 3 days after harvesting, chemical treatment of stump cut surfaces took place. This process is necessary only in case of heavily sprouting, non-indigenous species with an invasive character like *Robinia pseudoacacia, Prunus serotina, Acer negundo, Celtis occidentalis, Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, but can be left after cutting *Pinus* spp. The chemical was to be applied by brush, only in dry and windless weather in order to avoid the uncontrolled distribution of the chemical. We used a coloured mixture of "*Garlon 4E*" and diesel oil in 1:1 proportion

Elimination of harvesting waste took place in four ways. Since in September and October 2008 there was a ban for burning in forest areas due to lack of precipitation, the waste was stacked up.

On approximately 25 % of the managed area, the stacks were chopped by a special mobile machine (for photo see **Annex MTR C1-1/4**). Although DINPI consented to dispersing the chopped material on the area, a significant part of it was transported by the forest manager. After the burning ban, rest of the waste was and is going to be eliminated by burning. This waste management is on accord with Commission's note (12.06.2007).

Complete soil preparation was applied on un-leased lands (15 ha), since the forest manager of these areas consented to artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species only in case of using complete soil preparation, as the conventional method of artificial forest regeneration on the Hungarian Plain (Nagykőrös 128 B, 139 C, 140 C). On these sites all the vegetation but oak individuals was removed, including stumps, so using chemicals was not necessary in this stage of invasive removal. Stumps were transported from the sites, while harvesting waste was eliminated as part of soil preparation.

For photos of the Action, see **Annex MTR C1-1/1-5**

The complete management was left in a 1.6 ha patch of Nagykőrös 140 B (leased land), which forms a semicircular area of about 100 m radius around a nest of *black stork (Ciconia nigra),* discovered after the application, but possibly inhabited for a longer time. Black stork is a strictly protected species in Hungary, species of Annex 1 of the Directive 79/409/EEC., species of Annex 2 of the Bern Convention (19 September 1979), species of Annex 1 of the Washington Convention (CITES). In case of return of the nesting pair of storks, which we strongly expect, we plan to manage this patch in a different way compared to the others, including stem injection of standing trees, in order to slow down the change of the architectural complex of the surrounding area of the nest, so to make the nesting pair to stay on the spot. For a map of the area in question, see **Annex MTR A4-6.**

The methods proposed in the project proposal had to be modified for the following reasons. We foresaw stem injection in case of trees with a stem diameter thicker than 10 cm as a method of invasive removal on patches without artificial forest regeneration. The trees treated so were to be left standing, then, those which can be removed without destroying the grassland were to be transported, while the others were to be left to decay. However, during a detailed survey of the project target area in respect of spread of invasives, it emerged that much higher density of invasives is present, than assumed. In this quantity, stem injection proved to be much less cost-efficient a method. Moreover, other factors lead to change of methods. 133 ha out of 405 ha of the target area is state-owned (trustee and forest manager is NEFAG) and consequently not leased (see Action A4) but mostly characterized by habitats of conservation value. In this case forest manager NEFAG didn't consent to leaving a significant amount of wooden material on the premises the way it was as foreseen in the proposal. The similar viewpoint occurred in the process of leasing contracts. We also considered the hazard of fire this amount of woody debris may cause in the given climatic circumstances. All this lead to preferring stem cut instead of stem injection. Nevertheless, we intend to test this method on the buffer zone around the nest of black stork in compartment 140 B or in Strázsa-hegy stand (see Action A4).

The missing amount of elimination of invasive species over the implemented is Strázsa-hegy land and Pálfája stand. Latter contains the educational complex and the Nature Trail. This stand is in the property of NKÖ. Since it is the recreational forest of the town of Nagykőrös, it has quite a lot of individuals of non-indigenous but not invasive tree species, typical in parks in residential areas. In respect of this, and the recreational use of the stand, we plan a less intensive removal of non-indigenous species. Negotiations with the owner and manager NKÖ are going on. In case of Strázsa-hegy, we are waiting for SFS to register DINPI as forest manager of this land (see Action A4). According to informal line of SFS assign, this will happen in February 2009. Once it is done, we will be able to launch public tendering procedure.

C2 - Artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species

Expected results:

Transformation of the non-indigenous stands (*Robinia pseudoacacia, Pinus spp.*) of high canopy closure into stands of indigenous species (*Quercus ssp., Populus spp.*) around (60 hectare) and within (28.5 hectare) the priority habitat patches (altogether 88.5 hectare). Enforcement of the stability and unity of the habitat fragments.

Achievements:

- 27 ha planted
- 18,8 ha partial soil preparation (on leased land)
- 8,2 ha complete soil preparation (on un-leased land)
- partial soil preparation has proved to be usable with stumps left on site.

Action status: on-going, delayed

Description:

In order to reduce the effects of fragmentation between remaining steppic oak patches and those of neighbouring arboreal invasive plantation patches, we establish plantations of indigenous arboreal species, using management techniques which, in a long time scale, let characteristic species of natural habitats migrate, unlike the conventional method of complete soil preparation on the Hungarian Plain.

On all of the leased lands and on most of the un-leased land, following the removal of non-indigenous arboreal species and harvesting waste on patches of artificial forest regeneration, partial soil preparation took place. It means a series of 40-45 cm deep stripes with a distance of 210 cm to each other, in most cases in straight rows. It is 40 cm shorter that the locally general 250 cm distance of seedling lines, though longer than we proposed: a general problem of subcontracted forestry works, that machines for fine scale, less intensive methods are totally absent in the region. Making tracts are more difficult on the area with stumps left, but definitely possible to implement.

Into these tracts are planted the seedlings of indigenous arboreal species with diverse intervals, in a randomly mixed species pattern. For the density of plantation and the indigenous species used on the leased and state-owned un-leased lands, see **Annex MTR C2-4.**

During the implementation of plantations, problems emerged with the quality of the planting, which were corrected by the subcontractor.

On un-leased forest compartment 128 B, 139 C, 140 C, complete soil preparation was used, with 250 cm distance of seedling lines. After plantation, on these areas the seedlings were cut to root.

For the number and proportion of seedlings used see **Annex MTR C2-4.**

For photos on this Action, see **Annex MTR C2-2/1-5.**

We postponed the contracted nut deposition in Nagykőrös 56 B (un-leased, NEFAG) by Autumn 2009, because the present level of wild boar density makes it impossible to use this method without game exclusion fence, which is under construction at present. Wild boar is a very heavy consumer of oak nuts.

Acquiring the seedlings of subordinated, mixing, colouring species like *Ulmus minor, Populus tremula, Betula pendula* proved to be impossible from local areas with similar production site, only from more humid locations of Hungary. This is why we decided to use less species but with local origin, presumably more adapted to the dry production site. On Commission's note (12.06.2007) we clarify that seedling production takes years, hence we had no opportunity to handle this situation. However, out of project budget, we plan to order production of seedlings of species mentioned.

As a result of public tendering Procedures 1-4 (see Action A4) we contracted 60 ha of artificial forest regeneration. As foreseen in the project proposal, this covers a more intensive method on patches without significant indigenous vegetation. The missing 33 ha of the contracted 60 is going to be implemented in early spring, as weather allows. This is on accord with Commission's note (13.06.2008). For the map of contracted artificial forest regeneration spots, see **Annex MTR C2-1.**

Above the contracted another cca. 28 ha of artificial forest registration are going to take place. This session is including the 'Strázsa-hegy' compartment (referring information on this site, see Action A4) as well as small spots within steppic oak forest patches emerging as a result of invasive removal. We are determining such localities not only by field work but are intending to obtain satellite images on the project target area. Although it is not a foreseen cost, it provides a very informative overview on changes in forest cover, and so enables us to determine the most appropriate sites for the fine scale artificial forest regeneration methods like oak nut depositing we plan to test. Naturally, the precise location and spread of such sites will be definite in the course of 2009. We also have to leave capacity of artificial forest regeneration for cases when SFS imposes reforestation as a result of larger emerged patches.

C3 - Natural forest regeneration with the exclusion of game

Expected results:

12600 meter game fence is completed and the possibility of the investigation of the natural regeneration capacity is given. The natural forest regeneration is facilitated by the serious decrease in gnawing.

Achievements:

2200 m of 25006 m fence is ready

Action status: on-going, delayed

Description

As indicated in the Description of Action A4, 2 forest owners and the manager of their land consented to removal of invasives and artificial forest regeneration on un-leased lands of 139 C, D and 140 C only in case a temporary fence out of their budget was established. Regarding the results of big game monitoring in 2007 (see **Annex PR1 F2-7 on CD)**

Due to the different structure of ownership and rights of disposal of different parts of the target area, the public tendering process regarding fence construction passed off in three plus one procedures (see Action A4, Procedure 2, 3 and 4-5). The largest proportion of the fencing was the object of the last procedure to get completed.

For the different types of fences and public tendering procedures on the target site, see **Annex MTR C3-2.**

All the fences including electric ones will be completed by 15.04.2009. At Action A4 we described factors which delayed the implementation of Action C1, C2. Besides these factors, Action C3 was further delayed by the fact that although it was foreseen in the proposal that it proceeded plantation, in most cases fence establishment requires a completed harvest or plantation.

Three types of game exclusion tools are to be applied.

So called permanent game exclusion fence is 2.4 m high, minimum durability is 25 years

So called temporary fence is 1.9 m high, minimum durability is 10 years

Electric fence is 1.6 m high with 7 horizontal electric wires, operating by solar cells.

In case of the permanent and temporary fences they are containing of wooden poles and strained metal wire net with their lower end laid on or buried under ground and covered with soil in order to avoid wild boar-made holes between the lower end and ground.

Electric fence contains of wooden poles, too, but instead of metal net, the poles are carrying horizontal electric wires.

Major characteristics of 3 fence types:

	permanent	temporary	electric
height (meters)	2,4	1,9	1,6
length (meters)	12025	4204	8777
fenced area (ha)	145	47	41
fenced ha / fence m	0,012	0,011	0,005
project proposal	foreseen	not foreseen	foreseen in Action C2

For photos on fence construction, see **Annex MTR C3-1/1-3.**

C4 - Reconstruction of building complex for educational and ecotouristical purposes

Expected results:

- A properly developed and equipped building complex with its surroundings is completed for the implementation of action E3.
- reconstructed educational centre (one-storied, with employing hall, auditory and warming-up kitchen)
- ecological devices (solar cells, water recycling device, etc.)
- reconstructed outbuildings (public washrooms)
- open-air wood instruments and playground (tables, benches, bars, crossing gates, etc.)
- arrangement of camping site and sport grounds (tent plots, forest playground, outdoors recreational sites, forest sports ground together with, gardening, renovation of roads in the surroundings)

Achievements:

- Building complex, including outbuildings, and its surroundings is restored for the implementation of action E3.
- About 50 % of equipment is obtained
- Solar collectors provide heated water
- open-air wood instruments and playground (tables, benches, bars, crossing gates, etc.)
- arrangement of camping site and sport grounds

Action status: on-going, partly delayed

Description

Following the public tendering procedure (Action A3), the renovation of the educational complex started in January 2008. Technical hand-over took place in March, whereas the opening ceremony of the complex and Nature Trail (Action E7) was held on 05.06.2008, which event was joined by the Minister for Environment and Water (see Action E1).

The complex contains a main building for educational purposes, two outbuildings, one with shower-bath, the other with lavatory and toilet, a yard with open-air wood instruments and some playground instruments, and the surrounding of the yard, with open-air wood instruments and playground instruments. The entire complex is in accordance with building standards for disabled persons, including ramps to the main building and toilet possible to use with a wheelchair. The fenced part of the complex, and the main building itself is protected by alarm system. Within the complex, the conditions are given to the selective waste management.

The main building remains one-storied, contains a hall capable for both classroom, auditory and dining purposes, a warming-up kitchen, one room for the educators and storing the equipment, a lavatory, a shower-bath to the personnel, and a room for the indoor units of the solar collector. It also has a roofed, but outdoor terrace. Source of water heating is partly from solar collectors.

One of the outbuildings includes shower baths, the other has toilets, including one for disabled persons.

The yard contains open-air wooden instruments (tables with benches), a field with patches of different natural materials, like leaves, gravel, sand, cones, in order to improve tactile senses of children, a fireplace with trunks around it, a composting frame. Further development includes obvious distinction of different functions of the yard, like tent plots, educational sites, sports ground.

The surroundings contains open-air wooden instruments (tables with benches), playground instruments: two seesaws, jungle gym, wooden sculptures of animals, and a pair of swings, which is presently remounted, because it does not fit safety standards for playgrounds.

The broader surroundings include the first and final station of the Nature Trail (Action E7), one of the information boards placed out (Action A1), and the building of so called “Aréna”, which is on one hand a spectacular element of the area, but on the other hand, its condition might be dangerous. Ensuring that children visiting the educational complex are isolated from not only the inside but the proximate surroundings of the “Aréna” is a important task of the NKÖ, as the owner of the area.

For photos on the Centre and its surroundings, see **Annex MTR C4-1/1-5**

Obtaining equipment necessary for implementation of Action E3 is going-on. However, the most important equipments are purchased, so the educational programs are not hindered. For the instruments already purchased or planned to do so see **Annex MTR C4-2**).

D1 - Treatment of herbaceous invasives, follow-up treatment of arboreal invasives

Expected results:

As a result of the action the removal of 99% of herbaceous invasives and arboreal invasive plants is expected on the whole project area (405 hectare).

Achievement: none

Action status: not started yet (contracted), delayed

D2 - Follow-up treatment of artificial forest regeneration

Expected results:

Artificial regeneration and transformation of invasive forest areas (88.5 hectare) is completed. The indigenous species of transformed forests ensures the connection between and within the priority habitat fragments.

Achievement: none

Action status: not started yet (contracted), delayed

E1 - Information to the general public - Media work

Expected results:

- Increased interest on the issues targeted by the project and wide knowledge of the results achieved
- Wide media presence
- 4 press conferences with press trips held for the national media
- 1 press conference with a trip is organised for the international media
- Press releases are issued
- Press articles collected and filed in

Achievements:

- 1 opening press conference and press trip for local and national media to introduce the project, the problems to solve, goals to achieve, etc. was organized
- 1 press conference and press trip was organized for local and national media to the opening ceremony of the educational centre
- Several press releases were issued and sent out to the Hungarian media representatives
- Relatively high media coverage generated by the press trips and the press releases
- One of the national television channels broadcast about the project several times
- News and thematic articles were regularly published in the magazines, monthly papers and websites of the Beneficiary and Partners about the steppe oak woods, habitats of community interest, Natura 2000, project goals, conservation and educational activities of the project
- Articles were collected, filed in and made available on the project website

Action status: on-going

Description:

Media work started from the very beginning of the project with articles in the magazines of the project participants and in a local paper in Nagykőrös. The first regional press release was issued in March 2007 on the occasion of the establishment of the information boards of the project. It generated several articles in regional and local media and interviews in radio programmes.

The opening press conference and press trip was held on 08.05.2007 with the participation of 13 journalists, the members of the Advisory Body, project staff, guests and heads of the three implementing organisations. After the press conference a field trip was organized with

a short performance of a local archery club as media attraction included. They presented how people lived in that time when the steppe woods were the typical vegetation of the Hungarian Plain. A preparatory meeting and field trip was held with the participation of WWF staff, the ranger of DINPI and the press officer of the Local Government of Nagykőrös on 12 April 2007 (responsible: Klára Kerpely).

Most of the generated publications were issued exactly on the Day of Birds and Trees, on 10 May, what gave them special attention. Apart from the News sections of papers, on-line portals and the regional TV channel, articles with colour photos were published in magazines, such as *Vadon* (Wild) and the Hungarian edition of *National Geographic*. Furthermore, several radio and TV interviews with project staff was broadcast. In the programme on environment and nature of Duna Television, one of the national channels a 15-minute-long film was broadcast in June and December of 2007.

On 5 June 2008 a second press conference and field trip was organised for the opening of the educational centre and Nature Trail (it was the World Day of Environmental Protection, what helped to capture the media's attention). The programme of the press conference included the opening of the educational centre, the inauguration of an exhibition of children's drawings in it, a performance of a traditional singer of historical folk songs and sagas, buffet lunch and a guided tour on the newly built Nature Trail. The educational centre was opened by the Hungarian Minister of Environment and Water Issues. On the event participated the interested journalists, the winners of the children drawing competition (whose works were exhibited), project staff, guests and the heads of the three implementing organisations. The journalists and guests were transported from the capital to the project site by a rented bus. (Photograph of the event is attached in **Annex MTR E1-2**)

A preparatory meeting and field visit was held before the event on the 2 June with the participation of the press officer and forestry officer of WWF, project staff from the Beneficiary and the press officer of the Local Government of Nagykőrös.

As a result of the press conference articles were published in the regional daily news paper, local papers, on-line news portals (e.g forestpress.hu and greenfo.hu) and thematic magazines, and interviews were broadcast in different radio channels.

Articles and news, related to the project or the habitat are continuously present in the magazines, websites and monthly paper of the Beneficiary and Partners.

The topic of the steppe oak woods and the Nagykőrös site appeared in the most up-to-date on-line communication channels, such us private blogs on the internet, and the common thematic blog of WWF Hungary and other environmentalist organizations on a popular news portal www.fn.hu.

As local people are a primary target group of the communication and awareness raising, during 2008 we were publishing a 2-monthly series of long thematic articles, in relation of the habitat and project activities in the official local paper of Nagykőrös Municipality.

The main topic of 3rd issue of Cincér (DINPI newsletter) in 2008 is the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project, including leading article of the Mayor of NKÖ, double-paged interview with the project manager, invitation to the Pálfája Educational Centre and introduction of WWF.

In June, 2008 a shooting group of the Hungarian National Television made a film, directed by Károly Gyenes, about the project and the conservation value of the steppe oak woods. Several specialists and project staff was interviewed and shooting took place on the project site. The film was on TV two times in October 2008 in M2 (Hungarian National Television).

A list of printed and electronic media appearances (articles, news, interviews, broadcasts) is attached in Annex MTR E1-1. Selected articles (6 examples from 2008) are also attached (Annex MTR E1-3/1-6). Articles from 2007 were attached to the 1st Progress Report (Annex PR1 E1-2)

E2 - Information to the general public - website

Expected results:

- An up-to date website in Hungarian and English version with an e-mail address, downloads, links to a number of other websites (LIFE, beneficiary, partners, other projects)
- Banners and links are established
- A certain amount of visitors (expected number of visitors 30,000 per year) and downloads

Achievements:

- A project website in Hungarian and English on www.pusztaitolgyesek.hu was created, and its content is maintained up-to-date: required logos, a direct e-mail address of the project, contact information, project description, news, maps, downloads, photo gallery, links to a number of other websites (LIFE, Natura 2000, beneficiary, partners, co-financiers, other LIFE projects, related sites), etc.
- Links to the project website were placed on the websites of the Beneficiary, the Partners and other LIFE projects
- Total number of visits to the website till December 2008 was over 49,000

Action status: on-going

Description:

The creation of the website (design and programming) was subcontracted to a professional web designer team. For faster updates a user-friendly administration interface was created, through which the communication officer of WWF and the education programme coordinator of DINPI can easily upload new contents. The Hungarian version of the website, with an English summary included, was set up in by 2 April 2007. The full English version was published by 8 October 2007. The translation of the initial content was subcontracted, while the updates will be continuously translated into English by project staff and published in both languages.

The website is hosted by the same server that WWF uses for its own homepage. As WWF changed its service provider, both sites moved to a new server on 31 May 2007. From that date on detailed visit and usage statistics of the project website are available. Although in the first year the expected 30 000 visits/year were not reached (usage statistics of 2007 was attached to the 1st progress report in **Annex PR1 E-2**), during 2008 the number of visitors increased considerably, and reached 42,000 (usage statistics of 2008 are attached in **Annex MTR E2-1**).

Links to the project website were placed on the homepages of the project participants and other websites, as follows (this list is not exhaustive):

http://www.nagykoros.hu/

http://www.dinpi.hu/

http://wwf.hu/index.php?p=vedelem&sub=4

http://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pusztai_t%C3%B6lgyes

http://www.geocaching.hu/caches.geo?id=1825

http://www.forestpress.hu/hu/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=7706&Itemid=

http://www.kerecsensolyom.mme.hu/hu/content/show?dattype=links

http://www.life-tapolcaimedence.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19&Itemid=62

The website is kept up-to-date with all the achievements, news and photos of the project. Updates are regularly translated into English as well.

In order to attract more interest to and generate traffic on the project website after the opening of the educational centre an interactive on-line game was developed during the summer of 2008 (screenshots of the game are attached in **Annex MTR E2-2/1-2).** The game presented the foreseen conservation activities of the project and made possible for the player to be an active participant of conservation efforts, in the virtual world. In July, August and September a banner campaign was launched on popular, frequently visited on-line portals (e.g. www.startlap.com), to popularize the project website through the interactive game. Among the players that reached a certain score in the game and registered different prizes (books, T-shirts, fridge magnets etc.) were drawn. The list of winners' name was published on the project website and the prizes were sent to them by post. During the three month over 12,000 visitors played and more than 4,000 registered for the prizes. On the welcome and closing pages of the game links were placed that led interested visitors to the pages of the Pálfája educational centre (see description at Action E4).

E3 - Development of programmes for the educational centre

Expected results:

- Preparation of the educational strategy for the area;
- Preparation of educational programmes for at least three main educational activities (min. 5 school class, min. 1 summer camp, min. 1 Nature Trail programme, with all necessary teaching materials and methods);
- Preparation of a 30 hours "Train the trainer programme";
- Edition of a teaching aid book, in min. 500 copies;

Achievements:

- survey on environmental educational needs in the area
- exchange of experience with environmental educators
- collection of materials for the educational program
- educational programs worked out for the 'outdoors school' classes and the Nature Trail

Action status: on-going, delayed

Description:

1. Preliminary survey on the environmental educational needs of the region

This section was implemented through questionnaire inquires during 2007. With the aid of these, local stakeholders were drawn in by personal questioning (e.g. in the frame of 'Nagykőrös Days' event), questionnaires sent to educational institutes or downloaded from our website. For the questionnaire see **Annex PR1 E3-1**. (The content of the questionnaire is detailed in its evaluation below.)

a) 'Nagykőrös Days'

On 01.09.2007, during the festival organized in Nagykőrös town centre our project was represented with a stand. Besides the questionnaires to be filled in and information on the project, we provided games on better knowledge on nature for each age group (e.g. looking for leaf pairs of different tree and bush species, puzzles of oak drawings, treasure chest with corpses of a snag-beetle, longicorn beetle to be examined through a magnifier, interesting crops, seeds from the area, etc.). As a reward, promotional materials of the project were given for the players (see **Annex PR1 E3-2/a-b** for photos on the occasion). 36 visitors filled the questionnaire during the festival.

b) Download from the internet

The questionnaire can be downloaded also from the webpage of the project's education section.

c) Contacting education institutes

From all sorts of communication, this proved to be the most efficient (142 questionnaires were collected this way). Each primary and secondary education institution (27 altogether) were sent 20 questionnaires (in a format, which could be easily copied) in the settlements of Nagykőrös, Csemő, Nyársapát as well as Cegléd (larger settlements of the region). In addition to the questionnaires, all these institutions were given our promotional materials popularizing our project (20 project presenting brochures, 1 folder, and 5 stickers per school). This activity is connected also to Action E4. (For our letter and list of addressees, see **Annex PR1 E3-3**.)

Altogether 181 filled-in questionnaires returned to us. The first part of the questionnaire referred to the age, residence and experience in education of the questioned person, while the second part to the expectations regarding the programs of the future Educational Centre. A part of the respondents is willing to take part also in the elaboration of the education

program and the arrangements in the surroundings of the centre (they declared of these with giving their contacts). For the detailed evaluation of the inquiry, see **Annex PR1 E3-4**.

2. Preparation of an educational strategy

In the process of working out the educational programs, several special books were obtained and a large quantity of materials was download from the internet, as well as consultations were held so far. The education program coordinator of the project gained information, learnt best practices from the education officers of DINPI and other national park directorates in Hungary. She exchanged information also with the education expert of Szénások-LIFE (project run also by DINPI, as beneficiary), visited their LIFE-office and studied their educational methods.

As DINPI accredited an environmental educational program in 2006, this will mean great help in accrediting our 'Train the trainer' program within HUNSTEPPICOAKS. The evaluation of the questionnaires helps further shaping of our programs.

The collected material is partly in digital format, partly bound in a teaching aid booklet form (draft of the teaching aid book, which is to be issued in the frame of this action). For the photo of the teaching aid booklet and examples of other materials see **Annex PR1 E3-5**.

The education program coordinator participated in the following 'Train the trainer' programs and consultations:

Date	**Place**	**Topic**	**Participants**
8-10.11.2006.	Jósvafő	special meeting of the education officers of national parks of Hungary	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
30.04.2007.-02.05.2007.	Lakitelek-Tőserdő	visit in Kontyvirág Forest School studying the occupation of educational officers of Kiskunság National Park held for students	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
14.06.2007.	Kistarcsa	visit on experience-trail of Rügyecskék Foundation, studying their occupation with school children	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
22.06.2007.	Fót	participation and studying nature trail program of DINPI on Fóti-Somlyó	Beáta Papp (DINPI)
18.-20.09.2007.	Hortobágy	special meeting of the education officers of national parks of Hungary	Beáta Papp (DINPI)

For photo documentation of these see **Annex PR1 E3-6/a-c**.

Based on all these experiences and educational materials, the educational programs were worked out for the 'outdoors' school classes and the Nature Trail, and after opening the educational complex and Nature Trail, the implementation of these programs could start (see Action E5).

However, syllabi have not been prepared yet for these programs. Besides this fact, we consider it an important part of the educational strategy to have our programs in a deliverable form, like syllabi. Our new Educational Program Coordinator (see Action F1 and Comments on Financial Report) makes syllabi ready for the 'outdoors' school classes and the Nature Trail programs them ready by the end of February 2009, before the main season of the programs begins. The program of summer camp is going to be worked out and made a syllabus of it by the end of February 2009, too.

We face the most serious delay is in the domain of "Train the trainer programme". Main reason is that we found it a more organic development of the educational strategy to create the locally relevant "Train the trainer programme" after having field experience with the educational program itself. Such a program is inevitable for a long-term educational strategy, which is, on the other hand, a key factor in addressing ignorance of society, and lack of information (Threat 5). Based on these considerations we plan to reschedule the activity as follows.

- On the ground of experiences gained in the first season of the educational program and our new employee's former experiences, the syllabus and the documentation for the accreditation procedure is getting ready at the end of May 2009.

- Soon after this, the accreditation procedure is going to be initiated.

- Following the above activities, communication of the "Train the trainer programme" starts with the detailed program available.

- Since the accreditation procedure may take from half to one year long, we plan to start a non-accredited course in September 2009 containing 5 autumn and 5 spring occasions with 3 hours each, for one group. Since this course will be free of charge, it is likely enough that there will be satisfying amount of applicants.

- Once the course is accredited and remains free of charge during the project period, the school managers and teachers will be even more motivated to getting involved in the course, for the latter have a compulsory amount of credits to get anyway.

Inspired by the model used in Szénások LIFE, this spring we plan to launch a practical training, which in the present school term is going to be monthly held, and fitting the needs, we may develop it to a weekly course. This way of education serves not only as a regular educational activity, but makes much easier involving children above 10, because of the following reasons. Firstly, this kind of a course offers the opportunity of deeper investigation of the topics in focus. The other reason is that the structure of class schedule of students above 10 is much more rigid than that of the younger students, so it is more difficult to fit the 'outdoor school' classes into the class schedule. Based on the precedent of Szénások LIFE, we count this sort of educational activity as a one which strengthens the whole educational strategy.

For improving the number of groups participating in the educational program, Action E4 has a major role.

For the number of participants of different programs, see Action E5.

E4 - Communication of the educational programme to target groups

Expected results:

- Brochure on the educational centre programmes, 15000 copies
- Three types of green events annually, with 100-150 participants each (in 3 years, altogether on min. 9 occasions)
- The educational section of the main web page is emphasized
- High levels of public awareness on the educational centre and its programs and parallel to this, related to steppe oak forests of Nagykőrös and the Natura 2000 network

Achievements:

- The educational part of our webpage is in operation and serves up-to-date information with maps, photos, downloads, etc.
- A children drawing competition was organized in order to raise public attention to the opening of the educational centre and collect drawings for its decoration
- Family day in the Pálfája Educational Centre in 2008
- Conference presentation on the project with emphasis on Actions directly related to the educational activities.
- Participation with stand in events in town, like 'Nagykőrös Days'
- many presentations in Action E6 and many actions of E1 notice the educational activities within the project

Action status: on-going

Description:

Within this action, setting the educational section of the project webpage was implemented, both in Hungarian and English languages, at the same time when the website was set up. (A screenshot of the educational section is attached in **Annex MTR E4-1/1-2).** In this section we have been continuously providing information on the progress in the reconstruction of the centre, the development of the educational programme and the design of the Nature Trail. Milestones and achievements related to the educational centre and the beginning of the classes and other programs have also been emphasized in the News section of the home page.

All the material that have been produced in relation with the educational programme or the Nature Trail – such as the questionnaire sent to stakeholders, the result of the survey (see description in Action E3), the itinerary of the Nature Trail, the guiding booklet of the trail, invitation to events, etc. – are available and can be downloaded from the website.

In the spring 2008 more intensive communication was started in order to raise attention to the educational centre (opened in 05.06.2008, see Action C4 and E1). In March WWF convened a nation-wide drawing competition for children with the topic of woods on the Hungarian Plain. It was advertised in a press release and the invitation was sent out directly to all the educational institutions of the region, where children of the age 6-14 were studying. The deadline for sending the works was 22.04.2008, the Day of the Earth, in order to emphasize the message of the competition. We have received more than 500 pieces of art, made with different techniques, from all over the country. Some applications arrived even from outside of the country, from a Hungarian-language primary school in Romania. (5 selected examples of the best drawings are attached in **Annex MTR E4-2/1-3**)

A six-member jury, composed of Virág Kiss, a practicing drawing teacher and Márton Zsoldos, a professional graphic artist and project staff (Annamária Csóka, Beáta Papp, László Gálhidy, Klára Kerpely), evaluated the drawings and selected the best 15 pieces. For their authors valuable presents were offered and the works were exhibited in the educational centre during the opening ceremony and press conference, and kept there as permanent decoration.

A week before the opening of the educational centre a one-day volunteer programme was organized for the employees of the Hungarian National Bank, who helped to finish the arrangement of the garden and the decoration of the centre. The participating department published two articles about the project and their voluntary work in the magazine of the National Bank, which reaches the nearly thousand employees quarterly. (Photographs are attached in **Annex MTR E4-3/1-2**

Since the Minister for Environmental and Water was involved in it, the opening ceremony of the Educational Centre was an event adverted country-wide media attention to the project and its educational branch (see Action C4, E1).

We participated in the two days weekend event 'Nagykőrös Days' with a stand, distributing promotion materials on the 'Family Day' held on 27.09.2008 and Nature Trail programs, Nature Trail booklets and offering a chance to taste some of the elements of the programs: we provided games on better knowledge on nature for each age group (e.g. looking for leaf pairs of different tree and bush species, puzzles of oak drawings, treasure chest with corpses of a snag-beetle, longicorn beetle to be examined through a magnifier, interesting crops, seeds from the area, etc.). As a reward, promotional materials of the project were given for the players (see **Annex MTR E4- 4/1-4** for photos on the occasion), like observing insects by a magnifier, right at the stand.

On 27.09.2008 we held our first program day we called 'Family Day' at the Pálfája education complex and Nature Trail. Although the weather was rather chilly, about 100 visitors participated in programs which included:

- using microscope,
- folk games and handicraft opportunities,
- lecture on the typical habitats of the Nagykőrös area and the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project,
- lecture on architectural heritage of Nagykőrös
- showing the film made on the project (see Action E1) before its first TV broadcast
- guided Nature Trail runs on foot and by horse-carts.

Latter also served as a way of getting there and back from town centre to Pálfája. Many of the visitors who not used the horse-carts approached the site by bicycle, which is a preferred way of travel for environmental reasons. For photos on the occasion, see **Annex MTR E4-5/1-7**

This February we refresh our contacts with all the schools and kindergartens in Nagykőrös and many of the surrounding settlements in order to use our program capacity more effectively via giving the school managers and teachers an opportunity to planning in time. The most important way of getting a hold of these is going to be to see them personally about our programs.

Plans for continuation of this action in the next 6 month:

In order to have enough time for promoting them, we plan to define the dates of 3 day long family programs. These dates could be linked to green days as well as connected to seasons of nature.

The Education Program Coordinator has already arranged a schedule of programs of Nagykőrös we will be involved either with a stand or educational programs themselves.

E5 - Starting up the educational programme and continuous operation of the educational centre

Expected participation of adult and children groups on the programmes (25 persons per group in average):

'Outdoors' school classes:

- 2008/2009 15 groups
- 2009/2010 25 groups
- 2010/2011 35 groups

Nature Trail programmes:

- 2008/2009 40 groups 40
- 2009/2010 60 groups 60
- 2010/2011 80 groups 80

Summer camps:

- 2008/2009 2 groups
- 2009/2010 3 groups
- 2010/2011 4 groups

Train the trainer programme:

- 2008/2009 1 group
- 2009/2010 2 groups
- 2010/2011 3 groups

Visitors on the education section of the web page:

- 2008/2009 2000 persons 2000
- 2009/2010 3000 persons 3000
- 2010/2011 5000 persons 5000

Achievements:

'Outdoor' school classes:

- 2008/2009 4 groups

Nature Trail programmes:

- 2008/2009 15 groups

Visitors on the education section of the web page:

- 2008/2009 2000 persons 2000

Non-educational programs held

Action status: on-going

Description:

The operation of the educational centre is two-fold. DINPI is supposed to run the environmental education program, while NKÖ, by way of its establishments, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the educational centre and the Nature Trail, including surroundings of those. NKÖ is also entitled to organise events to the centre without educational purposes, but only in case those are not in contradiction with either particular aims of the project or general aims of nature conservation and environment protection. Working out a detailed agreement on the rules of non-educational usage of the centre and conciliation on program proposals is under process and planned to be finalized in February.

As recorded in our proposal, this autumn the NKÖ is taking over the running of the educational program, too. Since at the moment NKÖ doesn't have an employee qualified to this job, the Beneficiary would prefer employing the present Educational Program Coordinator by NKÖ, which option would guarantee of fulfilment of educational Actions we undertook.

Opening the educational centre only weeks before the end of school term, educational program started with Nature Trail programs. Since the opening of the trail there have been 317 guided visitors, most of them by organisation of educational institutes (age of participating children were 5 to 13 years old), some family groups and adult groups. Among the visiting groups there were both who registered in advance and who come forward during a particular event of E4 like the 'Family Day' in September or the Week of National Parks and the opening ceremony itself.

For photos on Nature Trail programs, see **Annex MTR E5-2/1-4**

'Outdoor school' classes started in the next school term 2008/2009. In September and October school groups participated with children at the age of 8 to 10, two groups in each month.

For the statistics of registered visitors see **Annex MTR E5-1/1-2**

As proposed in the Description of Action E3, this spring we plan to start a regular monthly educational program for 10-16 years old students.

E6 - Mutual communication aiming at different groups of professionals and dissemination of scientific results

Expected results:

- Experts are continuously informed about achievements in the management tasks as well as they can provide feedback by their comments on these actions
- Approximately 75 scientific experts from all over Europe, as well as 20 Hungarian professionals, get acquainted with the results of the project
- NGOs active in the field of the Natura 2000 site management have the opportunity to learn from the experience of the project coordinators

Achievements:

- Experts are continuously informed about the goals, activities and insofar experiences of the project and have had the opportunity to provide feedback
- Project staff participated and presented the project at several thematic events (conferences, seminars and meetings)
- NGOs, active in the field of nature conservation were informed, got acquainted with the goals and learned about the insofar experiences of the project
- A field visit to the project site for representatives of NGOs was organized

Action status: on-going

Description:

From the beginning of the project the staff DINPI and WWF has been participating at scientific events, where they presented the project objectives, conservation strategies and insofar achievements.

In November 2006 a seminar was organised by a large nature conservation NGO for botanists and conservation professionals about conservation actions to preserve plant species and associations in Hungary. Project staff of DINPI participated in the conference, where Katalin Sipos, Head of Conservation Department presented the project.

In March 2007 WWF staff participated in the yearly National Conference of the Hungarian Environmentalist and Nature Conservation NGOs and National Forest Forum in Kecskemét in order to inform Hungarian green NGOs and forestry professionals about the launch of the project, and also to generate a dialogue about the problems of natural forests on the Hungarian Plain. The project was presented by László Gálhidy and the information stand was managed by Klára Kerpely.

In the regular NGO forum organized by DINPI, Katalin Sipos presented the on-going projects of the Directorate, thus also HUNSTEPPICOAKS project to the invited representatives of NGOs.

In June 2007, at the ranger's meeting of DINPI held in Nagykőrös István Justin presented our project to the complete ranger staff of the organisation in field.

Annamária Csóka presented HUNSTEPPICOAKS project among other on-going projects of DINPI in the frame of a lecture to students of applied zoology, in the University of Veterinary, Budapest in December 2007 (The presentations held in 2006 and 2007 were attached to the 1st progress report in Appendix G.)

In November 2008 the 5th National Conservation Biology Conference was held in Nyíregyháza. In the Conservation Strategies Symposium project staff of the Beneficiary

(György Verő, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, Beáta Papp) presented the conservation strategy that is being implemented and further developed in the project site in Nagykőrös.

BirdLife Hungary, in cooperation with DINPI, organizes every year a bird-watch competition and educational festival in Tata, when the wild goose and other birds arrive to their wintering place on the lake of Tata. The project manager and the Head of the Conservation Department of DINPI presented the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project to the public, composed mainly of professionals including staff of other LIFE projects, and interested laymen.

Summary of presentations:

Date: 26.11.2006

Place: Túrkeve

Organizer: Nimfea Nature Conservation Association (NGO)

Occasion: Seminar about conservation actions in Hungary in order to preserve plant species and associations

Participant number: 70

Author: Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, Annamária Csóka

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: Problems and management of invasive plants in Natura 2000 sites belonging to Duna-Ipoly National Park

Description: The presentation gave details about the presence of invasive species, reasons of spreading, including a historical insight, then detailed the possibilities of their elimination by special treatments. It presented the planned activities of the HUNSTEPPICOAKS and other LIFE projects of DINPI.

Date: 28.11.2006.

Place: Budapest

Organizer: DINPI

Occasion: NGO forum

Participant number: 20

Author: Katalin Sipos

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: on-going projects of DINPI

Description: The presentation informed and gave details on the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project

Date: 16.03.2007

Place: Kecskemét

Organizer: Kerekerdő Foundation

Occasion: National Forest Forum

Participant number: 50

Author: László Gálhidy

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: Presentation of the Conservation of the Steppe Oak Woods of Nagykőrös LIFE-project

Description: The presentation gave details about the project site, the previous human impact and other threats and the objectives and planned activities of the project

Date: 28.06.2007.

Place: Nagykőrös

Organizer: Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate

Occasion: ranger's meeting of DINPI

Participant number: 33

Author: István Justin

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: HUNSTEPPICOAKS project

Description: The presentation gave details on the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project and was followed by

field visit

Date: 05.12.2007.

Place: Budapest

Organizer: University of Veterinary

Occasion: lecture to students of applied zoology

Participant number: 7

Author: Katalin Sipos, Annamária Csóka

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: on-going projects of DINPI

Description: The presentation gave details on the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project

Date: 08.11.2008

Place: Nyíregyháza

Organizer: Conservation Section of the Hungarian Biology Association

Occasion: 5th National Conservation Biology Conference

Participant number: 100

Author: György Verő, Katalin Sipos, Zsolt Baranyai, Beáta Papp

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: Long-term conservation strategy on the Steppe Oak Woods of Nagykőrös Natura 2000 site

Description: The presentation focused on the legal construction of taking over the restricted right of disposal

Date: 28.11.2008

Place: Tata

Organizer: BirdLife Hungary

Occasion: 8th Tata Wild Goose Medley

Participant number: 50

Author: György Verő, Katalin Sipos

Type: Oral presentation

Topic: Habitat conservation activities and techniques to show them to the public in the Steppe Oak Woods of Nagykőrös

For the presentation, see **Annex PR1 G/d_h** and **MTR E6-1, E6-2 on DVD**

The first one of the 3 planned study trips to the project site was organised on 13 October 2007. Most of the 20 participants were members of NGOs but also joined us some representatives of the media, specialised in environmental issues. László Gálhidy (WWF) and István Justin (ranger, DINPI) gave professional guidance to the group through the project site.

E7 - Development of a Nature Trail

Expected results:

- introduction of the nature value and role of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI and Natura 2000 network through 10 stations of the Nature Trail, with 2200 m length
- establishment of the first Nature Trail within the area of Nagykőrös town together with the local government
- free-of-charge service of the educational program
- 8000 copies of A5 format Nature Trail guide
- 1000-1500 visitors per year

Achievements:

- introduction of the nature value and role of 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI and Natura 2000 network through 10 stations of the Nature Trail, with 1800 m length
- establishment of the first Nature Trail within the area of Nagykőrös town together with the local government
- free-of-charge service of the educational program
- 8000 copies of A5 format Nature Trail guide
- 317 guided visitors, and cca. 2000 non guided visitors (latter by guess)

Action status: on-going

Description:

In the summer and autumn of 2007, with repeated, detailed field visits and GPS documentation, the track of the Nature Trail was designated (see map in **Annex PR1 E7-1**).

During the designing period the possible locations of the trail were tested and the topic of each station was discussed in field. With the designation of the track, the exact length of the trail is indicated, which is 1800 m. In the project proposal we foreseen a 2200 m long trail, however, during the field trips it revealed, that the feasible length cannot reach 2200 m around the Educational Centre. Nevertheless, as bicycle is a very popular means of transport in Nagykőrös, the Nature Trail is completed by a 2700 m bicycle route, which offers also possibility for visiting a more remote site, where forest transformation carried out in the project can be observed. The stations of the footpath and bicycle route are partly overlapping.

There are markings of a so called "Steppic oak tour" which indicates the way to the nearby patches of favourable conservational status in Nagykőrös 128 A forest compartment, where examples of management activities are also on view.

Stations of the Nature Trail are indicated by oak nut signs with the number of the station on it, made of wood and fixed on wooden poles (**Annex MTR E7-1/1**). This method is more resistant to vandalism, than using information boards at each station and a booklet instead of boards means a portable format of most of the information gained on the trail.

There are 10 stations, their description is in the booklet which belongs to the trail (see below). First and 10th stations are in the surroundings of the educational complex, near the information board. For images on the Nature Trail, see **Annex MTR E7- 1/1-5**.

Stations are as follows:

- Station 1: it is in the entrance area of the "Pálfája" forest stand, at the vicinity of the Educational Centre, the information board of the project established in Action A1 and the building of the "Aréna", which is spectacular even in its present condition. This station serves the goal of general knowledge about the habitat and the project established to preserve it.

- Station 2: the magnificent oak individual called "Pál fa", which tree gave the name for the entire forest stand "Pálfája"

- Station 3: a small patch fenced to demonstrate the effects of game and some of the management of the project

- Station 4: a pit to demonstrate the soil profile to show the characteristics of sandy soils and their consequences to the vegetation

- Station 5: a typical patch of the closer typed of steppic oak forests on a more humid production site

- Station 6: a site ideal to demonstrate indigenous shrub species and the structure of the shrub-layer

- Station 7 is supposed to be a site to observe some of the common bird species of oak forests

- Station 8: non-indigenous and invasive arboreal species are shown here

- Station 9 gives an opportunity to learn about the role of coarse woody debris in forest ecosystems

- Getting back to the education complex, Station 10 forms a huge outdoor game board, with laws of the game described in the trail booklet.

The Nature Trail booklet was designed, 8000 pieces of it was printed and cca. 1500 were distributed. For distribution data see **Annex MTR E7-3.** The main features of the design and layout of the booklet are A5 format, painted illustrations designed by two professional nature painters, Márton Zsoldos and Szabolcs Kókay, both of them well known in Hungary for very high quality representation of natural topics, especially birds. Having all the illustrations this way, the booklet has a uniquely coherent image, involving historical and present sceneries into the same visual context. Being printed on recycled paper, it provides a guide to environment friendly design. The booklet, as indicated in itself, is available at two sites in Nagykőrös (Mayor's office and Arany János Community Centre) and downloadable from the project website in *.pdf* format. The booklet is also available at the regional office leased within the frame of the project, and the headquarters of DINPI in Budapest.

The booklet contains the description of the stations of the Nature Trail, completed with interesting hints, simple tasks and detailed painted portrayals of typical elements of the habitat.

For the booklet itself, see **Annex MTR E7-2**

We inaugurated the Nature Trail together with the Educational Centre on 05.06.2008 (See Action C4 and E1). Naturally it composes a functional unit with the Educational Centre, as both of these sites are part of the infrastructural base of the educational activity.

For details on Nature Trail programs held see Action E5. Here we only add that estimating the number of visitors not having resort to guidance is a heavy task, but since the Pálfája forest stand is a traditional recreational forest of local residents, it is likely to have a significant number of such visitors.

E8 - The compilation of Layman's report

Expected results:

- 1000 copies of Layman's report in Hungarian and English languages (in A/4 format, on recycled paper, full colour, text with photos and figures)
- a publication documenting the aims, steps and goals of the project
- wider knowledge on the issues targeted by the project and increased awareness towards the Euro-Siberian steppic woods and Pannonic sand grasslands, threatening factors.

Achievement: none

Action status: not started yet

F1 - Project operation, organizing co-operation with the partners

Expected results:

Implementation of the project is proceeding effectively, organized and with expertise

Achievements:

- project staff works and cooperates
- local office is rented
- workshop was organized with project participants at the beginning of 2007 and 2008
- thematic workshops with partners are held connected to certain actions throughout the year
- Advisory Board was convened once in 2007, participated in field trip, and once in 2008
- project equipment is in operation

Action status: on-going

Description:

Each project member was appointed (together with the ones employed exclusively in the project, as mentioned in A1) in October 2007. Their task lists are extended by the references on their tasks in the HUNSTEPPICOAKS project. The participation of the project staff can be supervised in the timetables (in the case of the ranger also in the ranger's diary).

The project staff of DINPI spent several days in 2007 in the local office according to the timing of the actions connected to the project area. However, to enable local interested people to meet and inquire us regularly, the office had opening hours every Tuesdays, from 09:00 to 15:00 and also telephone contact of the project staff was provided. Numerous workshops were held in the office (with project partners, external monitor, Advisory Board, forest owners, subcontractors, rangers of the national park, etc.). Other details on the local office can be found in Action A1.

Our first annual project opening workshop was held on 22.02.2007 with the participation of all partners. Here, the achievements of 2006 and the tasks for 2007 were discussed and the detailed work plan for 2007 was approved (for the minutes of the occasion and photo see **Annex PR1 F1-1/a, F1-1/b**).

The second annual project workshop was held on 05.02.2008 with the participation of all partners. Here, the achievements of 2006 and 2007 and the tasks for 2008 were discussed and the detailed work plan for 2008 was approved (for the minutes of the occasion and photo see **Annex MTR F1- 1/1-3**).

Thematic workshops with partners were held in cases when considerable amount of tasks gathered to discuss and the personal presence of the partners was needed (as mentioned in every action separately, not exhaustive).

The Advisory Board was convened on 08.05.2007. for the event of its official foundation as mentioned in A1. (Its members also participated in the field trip.) Because the members of the Advisory Board are in high positions and extremely occupied, we agreed that the internet will be used as the main channel of communication (in December 2007 we sent our reports on the monitoring standards and results of this year for approval).

On 26.11.2008 a second Advisory Board workshop was held. Since the Advisory Board also serves as the DINPI National Park Council, this occasion was integrated into a session of that. After presentation of the current state of the project, the members of the Advisory Board made useful hints on some problems encountered on Action C2, like the problem of purchasing indigenous mixing tree species, hints on possibilities of using downy oak (*Quercus pubescens*) and communication between the nature conservation and forestry sectors For photo and memorandum of the session see **Annex MTR F1-2/1-2**.

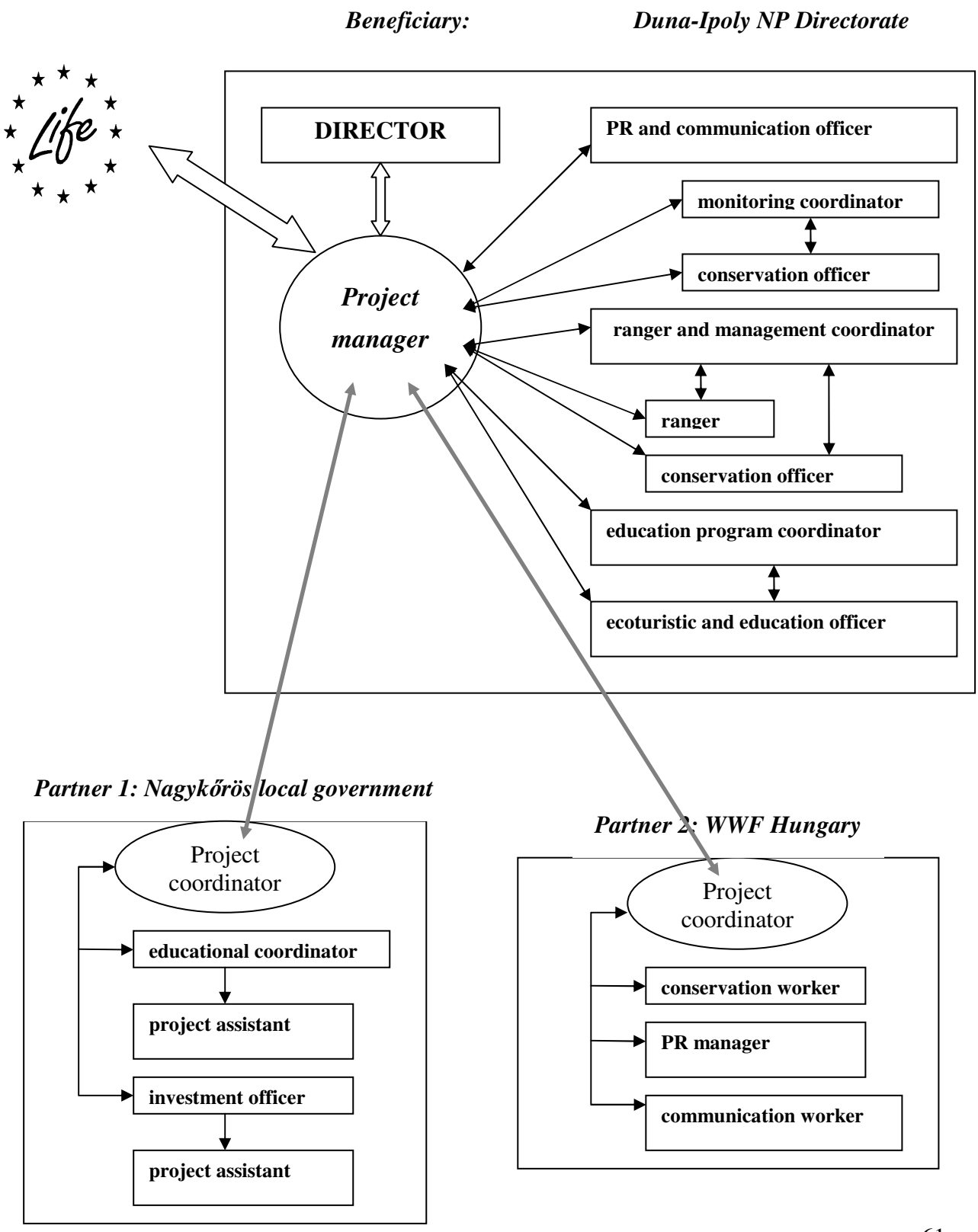
The necessary equipment for the project (4WD car, 2 laptops, 2 GPS, 1 digital photo camera) is in operation (their purchase was mentioned in A1).

For changes in the project staff see Comments on Financial Report. Here we mention the more important.

As project manager of the Beneficiary, György Verő follows Annamária Csóka after 01.08.2008.

As educational program coordinator, Mária Sápi Vinczéné follows Beáta Papp after 13.01.2009. Beáta Papp was employed until 15.12.2008.

The organogram as follows:



F2 - Conservation management monitoring

Expected results:

- the result of the action is the detailed documentation and evaluation of the effects of habitat management actions, through structural variables and indicator organizations
- on the basis of the monitoring data the real effects of the project are determinable and quantifiable, such as the trend of decrease of invasive species (coverage decline during the project, seedling grown up during the project, etc.)
- the results of F2 are important for the long-term management plan (management plan of the Natura 2000 site (Action A5) for determining the necessary tasks

Achievements:

- detailed documentation on basic state of the management quadrants in 2007 and 2008
- pitfall trap samples were collected as basic state survey in 2007 and 2008

Action status: on-going

Description:

Conservational management monitoring - botanical part:

In 2007 and 2008 this task was implemented by an external researcher, András Kun, vegetation specialist, experienced in surveys on steppe oak habitats. The management monitoring protocol for the special requirements of the project was elaborated by him. 20 quadrants were appointed by the researcher during summer, 2007 (with the participation of the representatives of DINPI). These quadrants will be sampled in each vegetation period until 2011. In 2008 these quadrants were supplemented with 5 more quadrants, so altogether 25 sampling sites were observed. For their distribution map see **Annex MTR F2-F3-1**. The data collection took place during the summer, through this basic state before management was recorded. The sampling units are 50X50 m quadrants that represent well the potential vegetation mosaics of the project area, sites as well as the management and regeneration types.

The researcher made draft vegetation maps on the quadrants illustrating the main vegetation types. The vegetation was sampled by types and levels, the coverage of each plant species and the area of the vegetation patches were recorded within each quadrant. As a characterisation of the vegetation patches, on the state of the vegetation type structural characteristics, species set, typicalness, condition and the observed damaging-disturbing factors were recorded. The researcher gave the complete species list within every quadrant and calculated the relative frequentness of each species. The number of oak seedlings within the sampling plot was also recorded. For the exact dates of fieldwork see report of researcher. The detailed study of 2007 and 2008 can be found **on DVD, in Annex MTR F2-F3-3/4.**

The annual data series will be elaborated by the person evaluating and drawing conclusions in 2011. The results will be used for the compilation of the middle and long-term

management plans for the Natura 2000 area.

Conservational management - zoological part:

Based on the reconciliations with the special staff of DINPI and experience of other projects using similar research methods, the following conservational management method was applied in 2007 and 2008:

The zoological part of the management monitoring was provided by pitfall trap series deposited along transects at the end of July 2007, operating continuously until the end of November 2007 (for their location, see map in **Annex PR1 F2-3**). On the average, a pitfall trap line consisted of 10 traps. The overall 85 trap was deposited connected to the botanical management sampling plots. The traps were emptied every second week by a DINPI team generally of 4 persons led by István Justin, during one day, or occasionally by 2 people during two days (for photos see **Annex PR 1 F2-4/a-b**). On some occasions project staff of WWF also participated in this fieldwork.

Two parts of the collection, ground beetle specimens and spiders were identified by specialists. Other selected taxa (their exact number will be known after the selection) will be forwarded to specialists to identify.

In the vegetation period of 2008, we decreased the number of pitfall traps to 4 series of ten traps for the conservation management monitoring. For their location, see map in **Annex MTR F2-F3-2**

In the summer of 2007 a window trap (for a photo see **Annex PR1 F3-5**) was also hanged in the canopy in the project area, as we considered this as a proper sampling tool both in management and biodiversity monitoring. However, experiences showed that fixing and emptying the window traps are difficult and the samples provided by these tools were not satisfactory regarding either quality or quantity. In 2008, we did not use this kind of methodology.

We also have to investigate the game populations of the project area because field experience shows that the excessive game stocks exercise detrimental effect on the natural regeneration processes of the steppe oak forests. On the other hand, it has to be continuously examined by our ranger that in the fenced-off areas game are absent.

During the year of 2007, the basic state survey was implemented in game monitoring, which serves also as a basis for the evaluation of the whole data series in 2011.

When planning the survey, we contacted also Szénások-LIFE for their experience in this topic. In 2007, the researcher charged by DINPI compiled studies on the methodology of game monitoring in the project area and the suggestions for future evaluation of the results. He also executed the game monitoring for 2007 from October to the middle of December.

The applied method contained walking along 5 permanent tracks 4 times each (at dawn or dusk, when game is the most active) noting observations on the observed game individuals (for the map of tracks, **see Annex PR1 F2-5**). In case of areas to be fenced off, a part of the track runs outside and a part inside the fence.

As this method is applicable well for fallow deer, roe deer, deer, but not much for wild boar, the survey was completed by observations made from hides by the ranger of the project (for

the list and photo see **Annex PR1 F2-6/a-b**). For the three studies see **Annex PR1 F2-7 on CD**. For a photo taken on game monitoring in field, see **Annex PR1 F2-8**.

As the methodology study is compiled and our ranger participated also in most sampling occasions in 2007, DINPI staff will be able to implement the game monitoring in each following year, after the establishment of the game-exclusion fence. With the help of the suggestions on evaluation, the rapid evaluation of the data series can take place, drawing up tendencies and enabling the inclusion of the experience into the management plan of the Natura 2000 site, in 2011.

F3 - Monitoring of biological status of habitat types of community importance

Expected results:

- the result of the action is the detailed documentation and evaluation of the natural values of the 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI, especially the qualitative and quantitative state and changes of reference habitat types and its species
- detailed lists of plant and animal species occurring, phyto-coenological records of reference habitat types and maps of the distribution of reference values utilized in editing the conservation management plan of the Natura 2000 site (Action A5).

Achievements:

- detailed documentation on basic state of the reference quadrants in 2007 and 2008
- pitfall trap samples were collected as basic state survey in 2007 and 2008
- taxa of weevils, longhorn beetles, moths, Orthoptera, spiders are collected, species lists are compiled
- dead wood material was investigated, species lists are available

Description:

Biodiversity monitoring - botanical part:

This task in 2007 and 2008 was carried out by the external researcher, who implemented also management monitoring. He elaborated the biodiversity monitoring protocol for the special requirements of the project. The 10 biodiversity monitoring quadrants were designated by the researcher during summer, 2007 (with the participation of the representatives of DINPI, photo in **Annex PR1 F3-1**). For their distribution map see **Annex MTR F2-F3-1**). The sampling was executed during the summer in the year of designation and 2008. These quadrants will be investigated each vegetation period until 2011. The sampling units are 50X50 m quadrants which represent well the potential vegetation mosaics, vegetation types and flora of the project area.

The researcher made draft vegetation maps on the quadrants illustrating the main vegetation types. The vegetation was sampled by types and levels, the coverage of each plant species and the area of the vegetation patches within each quadrant. As a characterisation of the vegetation patches on the state of the vegetation type, structural characteristics, species set, typicalness, condition and the observed damaging-disturbing factors were recorded. The researcher gave the complete species list within the quadrants and calculated the relative

frequentness of each species. The number of oak seedlings within the sampling plot was also recorded. The study can be found **on DVD, in Annex MTR F2-F3-3/4**.

The annual data series will be elaborated by the person evaluating and drawing conclusions. The results will be used for the elaboration of the middle and long-term management plans for the Natura 2000 area in 2011.

Biodiversity monitoring - zoological part:

The zoological part of the biodiversity monitoring was provided by pitfall trap series deposited along transects at the end of July 2007, operated continuously until the end of November 2007 (for the location of traps, see map in **Annex PR1 F2-3**).

The overall 45 traps were deposited connected to the botanical management sampling plots and were emptied as described in Action F2. If the trap perished (with great probability by wild boars), this fact was also recorded. In the procession of samples we plan to use the method described in F2. (For photos see **Annex PR1 F2-4/a-b.**)

In the year of 2008, we decreased the number of pitfall traps to 3 transects of 10 traps in the biodiversity monitoring, altogether with the conservation management monitoring pitfall traps we managed 70 traps. In 2007 their number was altogether 130. This reduction was necessary for the following reasons: the emptying of the high number of traps is very time consuming and energy demanding. Thus, our ranger will be able to empty the traps during one day (it is important from the viewpoint of the evaluation of the samples). In spite of all this, our ranger faced difficulties in managing the traps regularly, so, as some researchers suggest, we plan further reduction of the number of traps, in order to make possible a more effective way of their management. Besides the number of traps and our capacity, the other problem of the pitfall traps is the serious damage caused by big game (with great probability by wild boars) and foxes. This effect could be reduced by using game-repellents, of which application makes the trap management more time consuming, so again, the further reduction in the number of traps is inevitable. For the location of traps, see map in **Annex MTR F2-F3-2**.

Apart from the pitfall and window traps, according to our plans, the biodiversity monitoring would concern different taxa each year until 2011. (The quadrants of 50X50 m area are not optimal from the viewpoint of each zootaxon, however, we aimed to connect the sampling sites of taxa to the botanical quadrants if it is possible.) (For the photo of a window trap see **Annex PR1 F3-5)**.

Weevil and longhorn beetle collection was fulfilled in 2007 (for the species list see **Annex PR1 F3-6**).

On one occasion in autumn of 2007, survey on moths was implemented (see photo and list in **Annex PR1 F3-7/a-b**).

At the end of September 2007, an external researcher charged by DINPI launched survey on the Orthoptera fauna with one field day (sampling with grass net) which was followed with further 4 days in 2008 (see photo in **Annex PR1 F3-8 and Report on DVD in Annex MTR F2-F3-3/3**).

In autumn 2007 the comparative examination on dead wood material of native and invasive tree species was accomplished by two experts of the DINPI staff: Sándor Bérces and

Valentin Szénási (for the preliminary results see **Annex PR1 F3-6** and photos in **Annex PR1 F3-9/a-b**).

In 2008, a survey on arachnid fauna took place by an external researcher charged by DINPI. He observed the site on 2 occasions in summer an autumn, spending 4 days in all (**Annex MTR F2-F3-3/1, on DVD**)

This year a survey on beetles happened, for results see **Annex MTR F2-F3-3/2 on DVD.**

F4 - Continuation of the activities after project completion and preparation of an After-LIFE conservation plan

Expected results:

- An after-LIFE conservation plan
- The successful conservation of the area and the enhancement of the favourable conservational status of the priority habitats are ensured.
- Over the priority habitats conservation disposes, consequently conservational management has priority importance
- The local stakeholders and the public, as well as professionals are continuously informed on the conservational issues on 'Nagykőrösi pusztai tölgyesek' pSCI
- Complex educational programs (with the emphasis on the Euro-siberian steppic oak forests and Pannonic sand steppes) operate in the areas.

Achievement: none

Action status: not started yet

5. Problems encountered

In respect of Action A4 and B1, and consequently C1, C2, C3, we have delayed implementation. (In the case of Action A4, the planned deadline was 31.03.2007. In Action B1, the take-over of the restricted right of disposal was due by 31.12.2006, according the project proposal. The same parameter for C1 is 31.03.2008, for C2 it is 31.05.2008, for C3 it is 31.02.2007) Independently on the above, we also have delayed implementations in Action E3, of which deadline was on 31.05.2008.

The reasons for the delay are as follows:

Although DINPI could have initiated the compilation of forestry management plans and we started to work on this topic in October 2006, we faced a very long procedure, in which we were dependent on SFS (which is also the soil protection authority). Parallel we had to negotiate with the forest owners and managers of the forest compartments. In this round of new management plan compilation the case was not the simple prolongation of the present plan but a profound change to another kind of forest use. In this special case, we had to negotiate on the change of 'principal aim' and invasive elimination as well as forest regeneration, both in office and field with SFS by each forest compartment. In one certain, duly underpinned case a compartment was even taken out of forestry use (after survey on soil samples). This action part was time and energy consuming and required the cooperation of several parties.

Parallel to the compilation of forestry management plans we reserved numerous field days for the compilation of the detailed content of the technical documentation for the public management procedure, which practically meant visits and estimations on each forest compartment and recording data on the sheets elaborated by us. For the implementation of public tendering procedures it was compulsory to hire an external public tendering company. Certainly, DINPI prepared and provided all the technical material for the procedure, which also demanded long time.

The contract on the take-over of the restricted right of disposal contains parts, in which forest owners declare that they will enable the implementation of conservation management works in even those areas, which are not leased. To enclose these points, the exact documentation on the management needs in the compartments had to be ready by the time of contracting.

For this reason, the public tendering procedure could not have started before the contracts had been signed.

In Action B1, for the compilation of the final contract on restricted right of disposal DINPI had to charge an experienced external real estate lawyer because our law expert left the institute and was not replaced. What is more, our contracts with the take-over of restricted right of disposal over habitat types is the first to be bound in Hungary. There were no best practices to study either from the side of conservation or law. After internal negotiations, where we drafted the elements to be included into the contract and the real estate lawyer converted these into the special language of law, we answered the questions posed by forest owners and managers, problems, certain cases were discussed and the elements required by the owners were included in the draft proposal. This process consumed far more time than we foresaw in the project proposal. We had to discuss also with the Regional Land Registry Authority on the registration of the special lease in the land register. In the contract, we had to respect also the forest managers' viewpoints as they also have responsibilities. Two additional contracts had to be bound because of the diverse ownership characteristics of certain plot numbers. By the time of contracting, the owners had to declare that they allow us to implement the conservational management works on even those areas, which are not leased. As the contract is valid for 90 years, it had to contain special clauses regarding the

change of ownership, inheritance, havaria, sale and purchase, responsibilities in different cases, etc.

The compilation of the forestry management plans of the project area, the fieldwork necessary for the conservation management works, the preparation of the contract for the take-over of the restricted right of disposal and the preparation of the public tendering procedure proceeded parallel and in several cases we had to wait for answers from stakeholders (authorities, forest owners, etc.) in more rounds, which in several cases took long. What is more, these actions were built on one another (for example, the compilation of the forestry management plans and fieldworks are prerequisites for the compilation of the contract and the preparation of public tendering procedure).

As these latter actions are the most important pillars of the long-term conservation of the steppe oak forests and of the project itself, the adequate amount of time needed for their thorough foundation.

During our work, we faced additional problems, which were not foreseen, in the cases of the area of forest landowners and another with not regulated ownership. (For more information, see Actions A4 and B1).

On account of delay of Action A4 and B1, the implementation of Action C1, C2 and C3 is delayed, too. The public tendering procedure could start at the end of 2007. Some of the procedures went on rather slowly, primarily due to the big amount of completion of documents the tenderers had to provide. The other factor which made the procedure slow is the fact that in most occasions we got much higher offers, than we foresaw in our proposal. Adding to this, in some cases the offers were much dispersed, which indicates, that some of the services we resorted to do not have a simply assessable market value. This is more characteristic to those forestry services which contain more human power and less materials, and less typical in the inverse case, for example fence construction. In latter case, we had to initiate more sequential tendering procedures in order to close the gap between our foreseen and offered costs. All these circumstances resulted in autumn start of the forestry work in 2008, and a winter start of fence construction.

In case of C2, problems with the quality of plantation occurred, which were placed on record and immediately corrected. However, the subcontractor failed to finish the plantations before winter frost and the deadline of our contract, this is why a spring plantation is necessary. The modified deadline of spring session of plantation is 15.04.2009.

Although the deadline of fence construction (Action C3) is 31.12.2007 in our project proposal, which date is earlier, than that of Action C1 and C2, professional reasons justify that it is advisable to fence the affected location not before the plantation is completely implemented, especially in cases where the planted patch directly bordering with the fence. The modified deadline of fence construction is 15.04.2009.

Reaching the undertaken stretch of managed area we still miss the Strázsa-hegy stand (Nagykőrös 98 forest stand; Nagykőrös 0821/1 in land register). Purchasing this land by DINPI from out of project budget is under process. About the third of its 28.5 ha stretch belongs to several private owners. We contracted with the owner of the two-third of the land and with most of the private owner, but some of them are not willing to sell their property or not available. The problem is that an owner doesn't own distinct parts of this site, but it is a common property of them all in a determined proportion. This means that we can not see the date when the 100 % of this land will belong to the DINPI. In order to make the undertaken management possible to implement, besides the above circumstances, we initiated the registration of DINPI as the forest manager of the land, which is regarding owning the majority of the land by DINPI is highly probable in near future.

Delayed implementation of Action E3 has occurred. The Educational Program Coordinator's more intensive participation in Action A1, A3, E1, E2 and E7, than proposed led partly to this lag. Other factor is that we found it a more organic development of the educational strategy to create the locally relevant "Train the trainer programme" after having field experience with the educational program itself.

6. Comments on Financial Report

The reporting period (from 01/09/2006 to 31/01/2009) is 45.1 % of the total project period. We are working in HUF. However there is a high rate of fluctuation what makes difficult to estimate the real costs in € at the reporting time.

In Hungary we accounted net costs on LIFE contribution excluding VAT for whole period, but from 2008 tax legislation exclude LIFE projects' tax exemption from VAT. However, as there are still on-going discussions about this issue, we calculate net costs for the entire reporting period. If there will be no changes, in final report we will account gross costs (including VAT). since 01.01.2008 and will provide also the necessary certificates.

For the calculation of the expenditures (incurred costs) in this report the official exchange rate 1 € = 265,48 HUF from 02/01/2009 as published in Central European Bank has been used**.**

Evaluation of expenditure according to cost categories:

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED BY COST CATEGORIES

	Cost category	**Total cost according to the Commission's decision***	**Total costs incurred from the start date to 31/01/2009**	**%****
		EUR	**EUR**	**EUR**
1.	Personnel	*238 872*	***139 340***	58%
2.	Travel	*52 056*	***9 329***	18%
3.	External assistance	*636 500*	***218 030***	34%
4.	Durables: total cost	*329 600*	***144 540***	44%
5.	Land purchase	*490 000*	***295 684***	60%
6.	Consumables	*42 400*	***10 121***	24%
7.	Other costs	*21 880*	***10 703***	49%
8.	Overheads	*51 928*	***12 194***	23%
	SUM TOTAL	1 863 236	**839 941**	**45%**

Personnel costs:

It is in line with the annual work plans and budget. The Personnel costs of January excluding from the report since it would be paid out in February

There were some personnel changes during the period what are given in table below.

Name	Position	Partner	comments
Annamária Csóka	Project manager	DINPI	Was replaced by György Verő in the same position from 01/08/2008
Beáta Papp	Educational program coordinator	DINPI	Was replaced by Mária Vinczéné Sápi in the same position from 13/01/2009 (Beáta Papp's last work day was 15/12/2008)
Péter Kiss	Project coordinator	Nagykőrös LG	Was replaced by Csaba Szilágyi in the same position from 15/10/2007
Sára Nyikos Dr.	Educational coordinator	Nagykőrös LG	Was replaced by Szabolcs Szenczi Dr. in the same position from 01/01/2008
Szabolcs Szenczi Dr.	Educational coordinator	Nagykőrös LG	Was replaced by Beatrix Szabó in the same position from 01/02/2008
Csaba Szilágyi	Investment officer	Nagykőrös LG	Was replaced by Károly Abonyi in the same position from 15/10/2007
Ildikó Dajka	Project assistant	Nagykőrös LG	Was replaced by Gabriella Mess Mezeiné in the same position from 15/10/2007
Imola Biró	PR manager	WWF	Was replaced by Mónika Kiss in the same position from 01/04/2007
Mónika Kiss	PR manager	WWF	Was replaced by Alexandra Balogh in the same position from 05/11/2007
Anikó Kiss	Communication worker	WWF	Klára Kerpely took over his project work from 14/10/2007

Travel costs:

The Travel costs are under spent. However, with the launch of Actions C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, E4 and E5, much more travel costs is going to occur.

We are calculating with the km unit costs of the previous year.

Log books or travel claims are matching the time sheets.

External assistance:

Parallel to the delay of Actions C1, C2, C3, spending external assistance costs have a delay, too.

We transferred 3380 € of architectural plans and 610 € of information boards from Durables to External assistance.

Durables:

Under-spending of spending Durable costs is a result of delay of Action C3.

The Infrastructure part is going to be higher, than proposed, due to both the extra cost of Action C4 and C3. However, at present state, we don't except more increase, than 10 % of the budget category.

Great mass of equipment is purchased, except some furniture and educational equipment for the Pálfája Educational Centre.

Consumables:

It is basically in line with the plans and budget.

Other costs:

It is relatively small amount and it is line with the annual work plans and budget.

Overheads:

It is under spent. At the moment but we expect higher expenditures in overheads with the running of the Educational Centre.

Evaluation of expenditure according to sources:

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED BY SOURCES

	Sources	**Total**	**Incurred**	**%**
		EUR	**EUR**	**EUR**
1	Partners	*146 741*	***83 215***	57 %
2	MEW	*319 068*	***197 755***	62 %
3	LIFE	*1 397 427*	***558 971***	40%
	SUM TOTAL	1 863 236	**839 941**	**45%**

Partners' contribution:

Regarding the reporting period it is including Personnel costs and part of Travel costs and Overheads.

MEW's co-financing:

State treasury is transferring MEW's contribution yearly by instalments according to the annual work plan and budget.

LIFE advance payment:

First instalment is already spent. In total 150,27% of the first LIFE instalment has been spent

PROJECT COSTS INCURRED BY PARTNERS

	Cost category	Total cost according to the Commission's decision*	Total costs incurred from the start date to 31/01/2009	%**
		EUR	EUR	%
1.	DINPI	1 612 925	**665 337**	41%
2.	Nagykőrös LG	167 400	**143 105**	85%
3.	WWF	82 911	**31 499**	38%
	SUM TOTAL	**1 863 236**	**839 941**	**45%**

Auditor for Final Report

GEN AUDIT Könyvvizsgáló **Kft**.
HU-1143 Budapest, Stefánia út 57/B.
Reg. No.: 01-09-160621
Reg. court: Fővárosi Bíróság Cégbírósága

Person in charge of auditing:
Dr. Miklós Jeszenszky
2083 Solymár, Rózsika u. 38.

GEN AUDIT Kft. No. chamber membership : 000140
Dr. Miklós Jeszenszky No. chamber membership: 003492

7. Planned project progress (for the next six months)

A4 - Preparation of the conservational management actions

Registration of DINPI as forest manager of Strázsa-hegy land will be completed. As a result of this, public tendering procedure for this area will be possible and launched

C2 - Artificial forest regeneration with indigenous species

Continuation of contracted plantations will take place by 15.04.2009

C3 - Natural forest regeneration with the exclusion of game

All the fence construction will be completed by 15.04.2009

Once fences are completed or right before that DINPI is organizing the chasing out of game out of fenced areas. The precise method and number of such actions is subject of negotiations with hunting experts of both DINPI and local hunting associations.

Our ranger is checking continuously the presence of game within fenced areas completed by seasonal monitoring of big game (see Action F2).

We also plan to place small-sized and simple information boards onto the fences in order to decrease the potential tenses resulted by fencing areas. This is not foreseen in our proposal, but seems inevitable.

C4 - Reconstruction of building complex for educational and ecotouristical purposes

Completing the equipment of the educational centre will be finished by 31.03.2009

D1 - Treatment of herbaceous invasives, follow-up treatment of arboreal invasives

Contracted treatments of herbaceous invasives and first season of follow-up treatment of arboreal invasives will take place.

D2 - Follow-up treatment of artificial forest regeneration

Contracted first season of follow-up treatment of artificial forest regeneration will take place.

E1 - Information to the general public - Media work

Publication of articles and news in our own periodicals and the local news paper of Nagykőrös will be continued, as local people are a primary target group. Continuous presence on the websites and blogs of project beneficiary and partners will be continued.

Press releases will be issued at the important milestones of the project.

E2 - Information to the general public - Website

The website will be kept up-to-date with all the achievements, news and photos of the project. Continuous information on the programmes of the educational centre will be published on the website. The on-line game remains available.

We will continue to follow with attention the web usage statistics.

E3 - Development of programmes for the educational centre

Syllabi for Nature Trail and 'outdoor school' programs will be completed by the end of 02.2009.

'Train the trainer' program will be elaborated in detail and documentation of accreditation will be completed and a petition sent in by 31.05.2009.

E4 - Communication of the educational programme to target groups

We will carry on presenting programs on the website's educational part.

In the next 6 month we will organize 2 of the 3 weekend events of 2009.

E6 - Mutual communication aiming at different groups of professionals and dissemination of scientific results

We will continue participating in conferences and meetings on conservation topics.

We also plan to initiate improving discussions with forestry sector representatives.

The next field visit is planned to present the results of the elimination of invasive plants for conservationist NGOs in 2009 or in the spring of 2010.

E7 - Development of a Nature Trail

Continuous operation of Nature Trail will keep going.

F1 - Project operation, organizing co-operation with the partners

On 11.02.2009 members of the partnership will hold their annual project opening meeting. Here, the achievements of last year and the tasks of 2009 will be discussed. Apart from this occasion, partners will meet when project implementation requires personal discussion.

We plan to convene the Advisory Board for visiting the project target area.

F2 - Conservation management monitoring

Vegetation monitoring in the 25 management quadrants will be launched by 30.06.2008. Pitfall traps will be deposited in the project area during spring (the timing is dependent on weather conditions).

F3 - Monitoring of biological status of habitat types of community importance

Vegetation monitoring in the 10 biodiversity quadrants will be launched by 30.06.2008. Pitfall traps will be deposited in the project area during spring (the timing is dependent on weather conditions).

The survey on several zootaxa of the area will be continued.

8. Evaluation and Conclusions

Project implementation

a. The process

As described at the referring Action A4, we faced many obstacles not foreseen. This caused a serious delay of implementation of key management Actions. The overall reason for the delayed preparation was the lack of enough previous information on both the legal construction of restricted right of disposal (as it is the first such construction in Hungary) and the project site itself. Since Natura 2000 is the first and only protection of the site (except for local protection of 'Strázsa-hegy') in the past DINPI did not have personnel permanently present on the site. This circumstance caused the lack of sufficient information on the spread of invasives as well as that of professional contacts, which would have made the negotiations on forest management plans previously established, and consequently less time consuming within the project period itself. Nevertheless, right this formerly unattended condition made our project inevitable to implement.

b. The project management

Three partners of three different sectors and levels of operation decided to cooperate in the frame of HUNSTEPPICOAKS project.

Although the governmental and non-governmental background induces significant margin in the way of operation, DINPI and WWF are both dedicated to nature conservation. This is a strong basis, which shows up in the routine of cooperation. Besides the professional media work of WWF, their knowledge on forest issues has a function in the project, too.

NKÖ has a very important role to ensure the local operation of educational activities and dissemination. This decentralized way of operation regarding locally relevant issues is more efficient, than a centred one. However, on the part of NKÖ we face the insufficient measure of getting involved in the broader aims of the project above its main participation in reconstructing a building of its. In this respect we have further job to achieve a deeper involvement. We are sure this is possible, and once it happens, every Partner and the project site will enjoy its benefits.

c. Success and failures

Preparatory Actions A1, A2 and A3 are successfully implemented. However, in regard of A4, it was much more time-consuming than proposed for the reasons indicated above. Action B1 had a year of delay, but after the very careful preparations, we have contracts with very precise regulation of possible activities on the involved sites for 90 years. Being aware of the subsequent delays resulted from the delay of this Action, we consider Action B1 itself a successful one, which is enforced by the fact that this is a formerly unknown legal construction, and that we regard it transmittable to other areas of private property.

As C Actions are in process, we can not determine the success of them.

E Actions already definitely have a positive effect on Threat 5. We got feed-back on this topic from local people who were interested in the project site before it. They express their experiences that more and more people are interested, and that it is a result of our project.

The vegetation part of both Action F2 and F3 is the strongest segment of the monitoring activities. While implementing the zoological part we are facing difficulties of having too many

personnel involved. Settling, collecting and implementing the necessary preservative treatment is our ranger's duty, while the selection of major zootaxa is an external researchers job, and determination of the selected taxa is supposed to be done by specialists of the taxa. This structure resulted in sort of a derelict of pitfall trap monitoring, especially in case of 2008. In order to avoid this in the following seasons, we will set more strict schedules of pitfall trap management and evaluation; in line with this we will rationalize the amount of pitfall traps. In order to monitor big game density we adopted a simple and effective method which provides sufficient information for management decisions.

d. **Comparison against the project-objectives**

Our most important management actions have both short term and long term effects, being the latter the more important. In short time scale, a significant decrease of arboreal invasives is a fact. However, it is the long term tendency of invasive spread which really shows us the result of our activities.

On further assessments we make notes as follows. After construction and proper maintenance of the established fence, appropriate methods of removal of game inside the fenced areas, the big game abundance will most certainly significantly decrease in a short time. On the other hand, the essential goal of fence establishment is facilitating natural forest regeneration, which effect, again, shows up in a longer period of time.

This two-fold character of assessing success is even more obvious in case of artificial forest regeneration. Even the primary goal, which is completing a forest regeneration accepted by the forest authority, is one with emerging in many years. The essential aim of this activity is decrease of fragmentation. Considering the limited migrating capacity of most plant species, this result emerges in the longest time scale of all our objectives. However, it may rise earlier in case of taxa with improved migrating capacity.

This two-fold model is applicable to E Actions, too. As preliminary results show, involving more and more of local residents into the philosophy of our project is an achievement already emerging, while it takes a long time until this result will turn into a pressure on forest managers to fit their management processes to the needs of nearby habitats of favourable condition.

e. **Environmental benefits, policy and legislation implications**

Conservation benefits of HUNSTEPPICOAKS project are elimination of arboreal invasives, partly big game, thus enhancing natural regeneration of indigenous vegetation. By restructuring non-indigenous stands separating oak stands into indigenous plantations, fragmentation of remaining indigenous vegetation decreases. However, in order to preserve these results aimed at in the long run, it is necessary to establish a system of incentives and pump-priming to ensure that forest stands or compartments by very near to habitat patches with community importance are to be replaced with indigenous plantations either partly forming a narrower or completely forming a wider buffer zone. At present, oak patches often neighbour highly invasive *Robinia pseudoacacia* stands, which render invasive management in oak patches much more difficult and expensive. On the other hand, in broad surroundings of the project site, as forest managers usually state, establishing indigenous forests is unprofitable, and they claim compensation for such an obligation. Incentives should also include effects increasing demand on wood material of indigenous species managed in proper way.

f. **Innovation, demonstration value**.

The legal construction of restricted right of disposal demonstrates a high level of innovation relevant at least in country-scales. Forestry regime we use is not an invention of ours, but has not been used in such a wide extent yet, and completely unknown on the project site and its broad surroundings.

Determination of relevance in other countries would require deeper investigation on legislation of other countries in prior case and forestry regimes in the latter. Even missing data on these topics we regard the shift of management methods from more intensive ones (using heavy machines and operating in large scales) to more extensive processes (applying lighter machines, living labour and small spatial scales) has a general use.

g. **Socio-economic effects**

Although such effects may emerge, they are not articulated as goals in our project proposal. However, there might be some positive side effects in this domain apart from the explicit aims we set. Please note, that thoughts below lack underlying analysis.
In case less intensive forestry methods spread either as service ordered by DINPI or as a result of incentives, it may lead to the need of more living labour. In addition, the requirement of lighter and consequently cheaper machines may decentralize and diversify the market of suppliers.
Another field may worth to investigate before a management plan is the possible diversification of utilization of habitats and established indigenous plantations. Integrating such a paradigm into a management plan may enable needy groups of local society to satisfy some of their needs in a controlled way.

h. **The future: sustainability**

Restricted right of disposal taken over by DINPI for 90 years on 175 ha ensures that any management activity on the affected sites serves exclusively nature conservation aims. However, state of even these sites may decline in case the neighbouring areas remain managed in the same way, including complete soil preparation, non-indigenous arboreal species and high game density. In this case, invasive pressure will be a permanent threat, and fragmentation can not be decreased further.

At present we are certain of that problems of natural forest regeneration is mainly caused by the overstocked game population. Nevertheless, on the long run decrease of ground water level may reach a critical point, when sand steppes will replace oak patches.

In case of the educational centre, the sustainability depends on the local will. One aim of us is to create the personal conditions of sustainable educational activity within the organization of NKÖ.

i. **Long term indicators of the project success**

- number of invasives in sample plots of oak patches
- number of indigenous seedlings of different ages in sample plots of oak patches
- number or density of game individuals inside fenced areas
- number or rate of surviving seedlings on artificial forest regeneration sites
- number of visitors of educational programs

Annexes

A1-1: Distribution of project launch brochure
A2-1: Distribution list of promotional materials
A4-1: Declaration of SFS on fence establishment
A4-2/1-4: Forest owner's declarations on management on un-leased lands
A4-3/1-5: Summaries of public tendering Procedures 1-5 resulted in contract
A4-4/1-2: Documentation of invalid bids in the open stage of Procedure 1
A4-5: Consent of NEFAG to invite more tenderers to fence segment in 56 B
A4-6: Track of fence and buffer zone around *Ciconia nigra* nest in 140 B and 56 B
A4-7: DINPI initiates to register it as forest manager of Strázsa-hegy
A4-8: Overview of leased lands and forest managers on un-leased lands
B1-1: Photo on signing final contract on 12.08.2008
B1-2: For a sample of final contract, se Annexes **on DVD**
C1-1/1-5: Photos on removal of arboreal invasives
C1-2: Minutes of handover of harvesting on leased and un-leased (NEFAG) lands
C2-1: Contracted artificial forest regeneration areas
C2-2/1-5: Photos on artificial forest regeneration
C2-3: Minutes of handover of artificial forest regeneration (Procedure 1, 2)
C2-4: Amount and density of planted seedling species
C3-1/1-3: Photos on fence construction
C3-2: Tracks of contracted fences
C4-1/1-5: Photos on reconstructed building
C4-2: Table of equipment for the Educational Centre
E1-1: Media coverage
E1-2: Opening ceremony at 'Pálfája' Educational Centre
E2-1: Web usage statistics
E2-2/1-2: Screenshots of on-line game
E4-1/1-2: Screenshots of educational section of project website
E4-2/1-3: 3 of the best drawings received to compete
E4-3/1-2: Volunteer work at the Educational Centre
E4-4/1-4: Photos on Nagykőrös Days 2008 event
E4-5/1: Poster of family day held on 27.09.2008
E4-5/2-7: Photos on Family Day held on 27.09.2008
E5-1/1-2: Table of guided programs
E5-2/1-4: Photos of educational programs
E6-1: Presentation on 5th National Conservation Biology Conference 08.11.2008 on **DVD**
E6-2: Presentation on 8th Tata Wild Goose Medley 28.11.2008 on **DVD**
E7-1/1-5: Photos on the 'Pálfája' Nature Trail
E7-2: Nature Trail booklet
E7-3: Distribution of nature Trail booklet
F1-1/1: Photo on annual project workshop 05.02.2008
F1-1/2: Memorandum of annual project workshop 05.02.2008
F1-1/3: List of participants
F1-2/1: Photo on session of Advisory Board on 26.11.2008
F1-2/2: Memorandum of session of Advisory Board on 26.11.2008
F2-F3-1: Vegetation management and biodiversity monitoring quadrants in 2008
F2-F3-2: Pitfall trap sequences for management and biodiversity monitoring in 2008
F2-F3-3/1: Report on Arachnida, see **DVD**
F2-F3-3/2: Report on Coleoptera, see **DVD**
F2-F3-3/3: Report on Orthoptera, see **DVD**
F2-F3-3/4: Report on vegetation, see **DVD**
F3-4/1-2: Photos on sampling